

# TIME

Gregory Grammer, 17, is one of thousands training for a war that started before he was born.

## America's Forever War

A SPECIAL REPORT





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*Photograph by Peter  
van Agtmael—  
Magnum Photos for  
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**ON THE COVERS:**  
*Photographs by Gillian  
Laub for TIME*





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# Conversation



## WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT...

**HER CASE** Molly Ball's Oct. 14 profile of U.S. Senator Kamala Harris left readers divided on how far the California Democrat will go in the 2020 presidential race. Fred Wirtz of West Bend, Iowa, said the story convinced him Harris makes decisions based on hard data, a trait that would make her a "very good President." Yet some Twitter users doubted her national appeal, with @Cramirez6868 describing California politics as "a world away from the rest of the U.S." and @dayalra tweeting that Harris' 15 minutes of fame had passed: "She began with so much promise, then seemed to enter a long slide." But while acknowledging that Harris "may not be today's front runner," @KimberlyEmerson argued the Senator deserved to be on the cover of TIME because she's "worth learning more about."

**'you look Presidential! This is your time (no pun intended)!'**

@PEACHESBEACHES5, on Twitter

**THE GLOBAL WAR ON TRUTH** The excerpt of former TIME editor Richard Stengel's new book *Information Wars*, in the Oct. 7 issue, got readers thinking about solutions to the disinformation crisis. Lee R. Talley of Tinley

Park, Ill., suggested turning to "retro" print news sources while assuming "anything you read on the Internet is false." Ted Risser of Grants Pass, Ore., said Stengel's list of actions to minimize disinformation could have an additional point: "Elect a President that tells the truth." Still, Hendrik Weiler of Port Perry,

**'Richard Stengel's article is informative and shows a scary future for our country.'**

BILL HOWARD, Liberty Lake, Wash.

Canada, argued governments can't be trusted to provide objective information.



## NEXT GENERATION LEADERS

TIME's new class of Next Generation Leaders, a semiannual project launched in partnership with Rolex in 2014, highlights up-and-coming activists, innovators, artists and athletes around the world. The latest honorees range from Stormzy, the first black solo artist to headline the U.K.'s Glastonbury Festival; to Zainab Fasiki, a Moroccan feminist tackling

misogyny through comics; to expectation-defying opera singer Davone Tines, seen above during a TIME video shoot. "It can be easy to feel like today's problems are insurmountable," says deputy international editor Naina Bajekal, who oversees the list. "So it gives me hope to spotlight the people using their voices to push for change." See video profiles of this year's honorees at [time.com/nextgenleaders](https://time.com/nextgenleaders)



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**TIMELINE** With an impeachment inquiry under way in Washington, D.C., TIME's director of data journalism, Chris Wilson, produced an interactive sliding scale that shows, based on the experiences of Presidents Nixon and Clinton, how the stages of that process could line up with key steps in the 2020 presidential campaign season. Explore more at [time.com/impeachment-calculator](https://time.com/impeachment-calculator)

## TALK TO US

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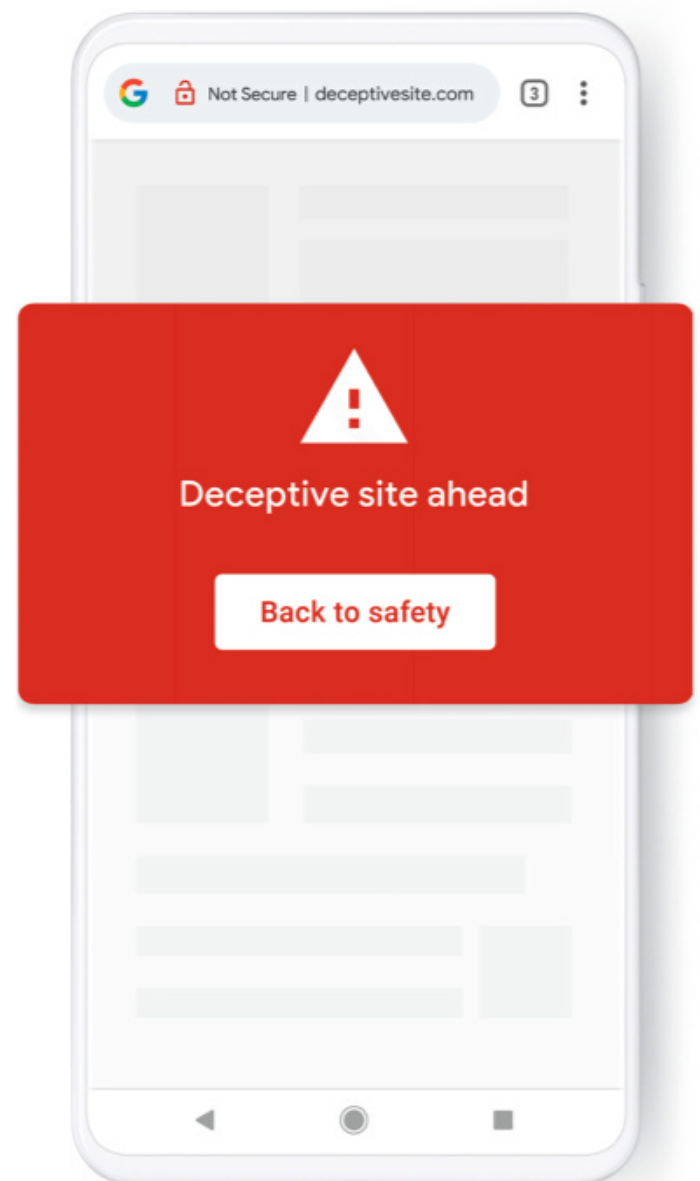


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# Conversation

## The longest war

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL REPORT ON THE U.S. military, as a new generation joins its longest war, is the latest in nearly a century of TIME coverage of American armed forces and the allies fighting alongside them. In recent decades, society has increasingly focused on how much the military, its actions and the treatment of veterans square with the nation's ideals. In a 1981 cover on "forgotten warriors" from the Vietnam War, TIME reported that the turbulent spirit of the '60s had compounded an already "abrupt, surreal transition" from the jungle: "Citizens no longer knew what their citizenship meant; men no longer knew what their manhood demanded. The war cost more than Americans could immediately pay." During the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, TIME covers in 2011 and 2013 highlighted vets who, after completing their uniformed service, continued to exemplify citizenship by starting nonprofits and addressing every kind of wound.

In this week's cover story, Elliot Ackerman, a Marine veteran who is both a Silver Star recipient and a National Book Award finalist, argues that an all-volunteer military lets most Americans avoid the cost of war. The U.S. had no "forever war," Ackerman notes, when it had a draft. At Parris Island, in South Carolina, Ackerman interviewed and award-winning photographer Gillian Laub made portraits of new Marines born after 9/11 who are training for the wars they have never known life without.

"A lot of people waste their time doing nothing," said Gregory Grammer of Myrtle Beach, S.C., one of three teens featured on separate covers. "I can say for sure that I joined the Marine Corps, and I did something."



Photographer  
Laub at work in  
Parris Island,  
S.C., in early  
October

Ashley Luna Gorbea of Springfield, Mass., said her earliest memory of the 9/11 wars is from middle school. "They had a moment of silence, and I was like, whoa, and I asked my history teacher what's so special about today. She said that 9/11 was a moment when the whole country came together, and that really struck me. How something so big could make us all unite."

Read all of TIME's past cover stories on the military at [time.com/vault](http://time.com/vault)

### BACK IN TIME



1945

Americans learn what it's like to be combat infantrymen in World War II through Bill Mauldin's cartoons



1980

TIME hosts a seminar in NYC to discuss a military personnel shortage after the draft ended in '73



2005

Three grads reflect on how 9/11 and the still new War on Terror shaped their experience at West Point



2011

Profiles of Iraq and Afghanistan vets who feel increasingly isolated from civilians in the U.S.



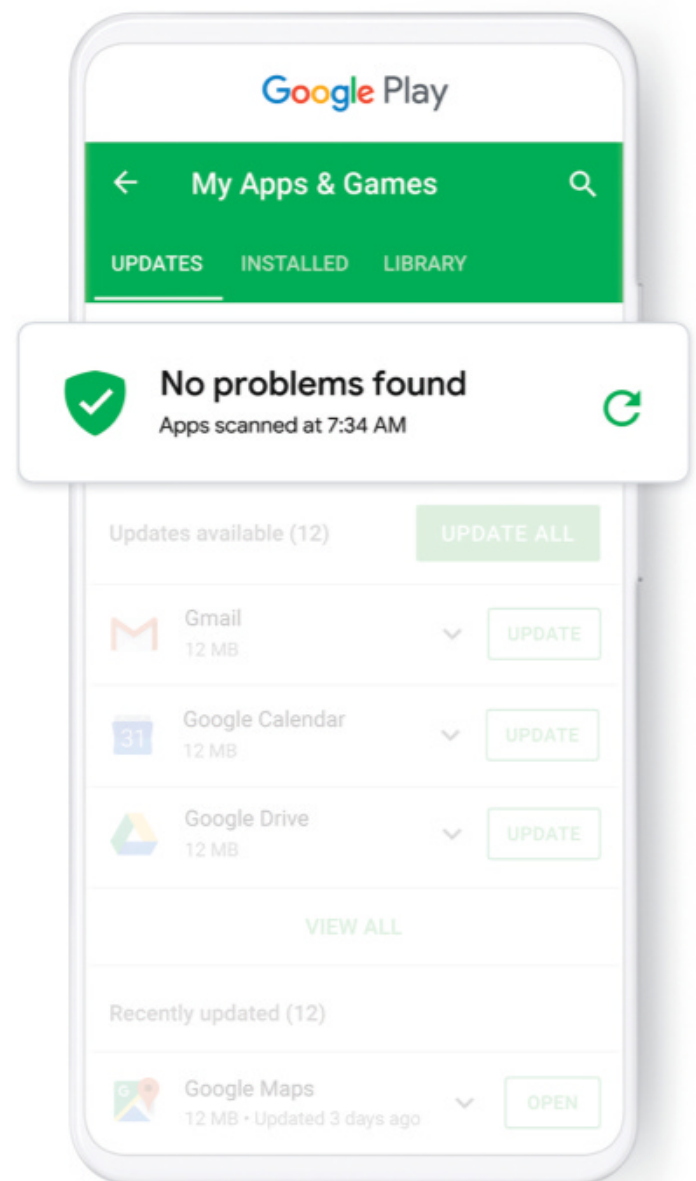
2018

TIME follows seven Afghan children recovering from injuries sustained in a grenade explosion





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# For the Record

**'Negotiations have taken a turn for the worse.'**

**TERRY DITTES,**  
UAW vice president, in a message to members of the union; 49,000 GM autoworkers have been on strike since Sept. 16

## 241

Number of Microsoft email accounts, including some linked to a U.S. presidential campaign, that were targeted by Iran-linked hackers, the company confirmed on Oct. 4; four accounts were breached

*'I know I will be assassinated, but it's not them I'm afraid of.'*

**ZARIFA GHAFARI,**  
one of Afghanistan's only female mayors, speaking to the *New York Times* for an Oct. 4 story, on death threats from the Taliban and the Islamic State

# 'I'VE LIVED A GOOD LIFE, A FULL LIFE, AND I'M NEARING THE END OF THAT LIFE. I KNOW THAT.'

**ALEX TREBEK,**  
*Jeopardy!* host, discussing the progress of his treatment for pancreatic cancer in an Oct. 4 CTV interview

**'This election has never been about me.'**

**STEVEN REED,**  
after being elected as the first African-American mayor of Montgomery, Ala., on Oct. 8



## 20

Number of newly identified moons scientists announced on Oct. 7 they had found orbiting Saturn, bringing the planet's total to a solar-system-topping 82; an online contest to name them will be open until December



## \$87,000

**Funds Atlantic City Mayor Frank Gilliam Jr. admitted he stole from a youth basketball team when he pleaded guilty to wire fraud on Oct. 3**

*'If Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the Economy of Turkey.'*

**DONALD TRUMP,**  
U.S. President, in an Oct. 7 tweet on his choice to pull U.S. troops out of northeast Syria before a Turkish military operation there

**Cats**  
Justin Bieber is criticized by PETA for spending \$35,000 on two designer cats

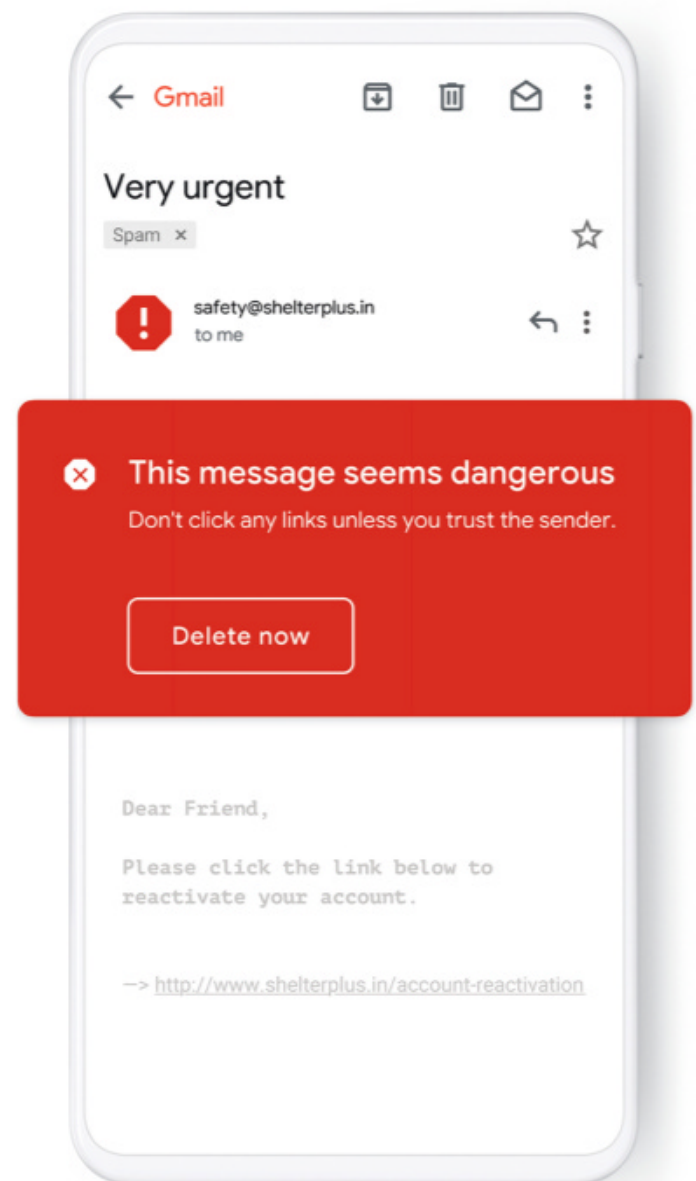


**Dogs**  
American Heart Association studies link dog ownership with living longer





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# The Brief



**SHADOW  
POLITICS**  
Candidates are  
scrambling  
for political  
advantage as the  
impeachment  
fight heats up

## INSIDE

TRUMP'S SURPRISE POLICY  
CHANGE ON SYRIA

A SUPREME COURT CASE THAT  
SENDS A MESSAGE ON ABORTION

DRUMMER GINGER BAKER'S  
ROCK REVOLUTION

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS



## NATION

# Impeachment politics and the fight for 2020

By Philip Elliott

**I**T'S STANDING ROOM ONLY IN EDDY'S KITCHEN, a tiny deli with mismatched floor tiles and laminated menus in North Plainfield, N.J., when Democratic Congressman Tom Malinowski begins explaining why he supports the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump. "What is the difference between the United States of America and Russia? What is the difference between the United States of America and Venezuela?" he asks. American politicians, he says, "put their duty to their country, to their people first—ahead of their duty to themselves." Trump, Malinowski charges, broke that pact when he asked the Ukrainian President in a July 25 phone call to do him a "favor" by investigating one of his political rivals: "Not 'us, America' a favor," he says, "but 'me' a political favor."

As Washington gears up to judge whether Trump abused the power of the presidency, Congress and the White House are preparing for months of procedural and legal battles over subpoenas, testimony and the balance of power between the coequal branches of government. But in Malinowski's district and across the country, the impact is more immediate. Control of the House, the Senate and the presidency may hinge on how voters in a handful of state and local races react to the constitutional crisis unfolding in Washington when they go to the polls in November 2020. For Democrats and Republicans, the fight to win the politics of impeachment has already begun.

In Malinowski's narrowly Republican district, for example, three GOP challengers have already announced a run for his seat. Elsewhere, Democrats are particularly vulnerable in the 31 districts where voters went for Trump in 2016 but elected Democratic House members in 2018. Democrats can afford to lose just 17 of those races next year and retain a majority in the House. Political operatives in both parties are doing similar math to identify the handful of Senate races most at play in the impeachment battle. The Democratic presidential candidates, and the Trump campaign itself, are already adjusting their 2020 strategies to account for the coming impeachment battle. On Oct. 9, Joe Biden became the latest Democratic contender to call for Trump's impeachment.

So far, Democrats are presenting the issue as a narrow, moral one. Impeachment is not about disliking the President, they say; it's about preserving the rule of law. Republicans are framing the issue as an unconstitutional attempt

to pre-empt the will of the voters and overturn the 2016 election results. Which argument wins may determine the U.S. political map for years to come.

**AT FIRST BLUSH**, the polls look good for Democrats. After the White House released a transcript on Sept. 24 that showed Trump pushing the Ukrainians to investigate Democratic front runner Biden, public opinion swung against the President. Roughly two-thirds of voters found Trump's request inappropriate, and 61% agreed with the Democrats' subsequent announcement of an impeachment inquiry, according to an early-October Washington Post survey. Since May, support for impeachment has risen eight points among Republicans and 11 points among independents, according to a CNN survey. Public support for impeachment is now higher than it was when the House launched proceedings against Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton, and the trend has cheered Democrats. "The movement among independent voters is significant and profound," says Jesse Ferguson, a 2016 aide to Hillary Clinton.

But national polling tells only part of the story. The Republican National Committee announced it planned to spend \$2 million on broadcast ads blasting impeachment, and the President's re-election campaign has spent nearly \$1.2 million on impeachment-themed Facebook ads. The House Republicans' campaign arm has spent more than \$50,000 on Facebook ads targeting Democrats, and its Senate counterpart has spent roughly half that, according to data compiled by Democratic firm Bully Pulpit Interactive. In early October, Vice President Mike Pence visited Iowa and Minnesota to criticize Democrats on the issue.

Democrats' responses have been less robust. The Democratic National Committee has spent just \$12,000—less than 3% of its digital spending—on impeachment-related Facebook ads. For them, the battles are fought locally. Max Rose, whose New York City district went for Trump in 2016, has been careful in his framing of the issue. "We have to make sure the American people understand this is a sad day," he tells TIME. "But the President brought us to this moment." In the Senate, the battle is shaping up in Alabama, Arizona, North Carolina, Colorado and Maine—the five races that the Cook Political Report labels as toss-ups or leaning.

For Malinowski, re-election may depend on how much punch he can pack at events like the one at Eddy's. "I don't know where this ends," he tells the crowd, adding, "I want to end up demonstrating that our democracy is still alive. That we still have checks and balances in this country, that we still have the rule of law in the United States of America." —With reporting by ABBY VESOULIS/NORTH PLAINFIELD, N.J. and ALANA ABRAMSON/WASHINGTON

**The  
impeachment  
inquiry is  
a 'blatant  
attempt to  
overturn the  
will of the  
American  
people in the  
last election.'**

**VP MIKE PENCE,**  
on Oct. 5







Smoke rises over Ras al-Ayn, Syria, on Oct. 9, after Turkey launched “Operation Peace Spring” against the Syrian Democratic Forces, a U.S.-backed Kurdish militia

#### THE BULLETIN

## Trump retreats ahead of Turkish operation against U.S. allies in Syria

IN A MAJOR SHIFT IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, President Donald Trump ordered troops to vacate part of northeast Syria on Oct. 6, making way for a Turkish military operation against the Kurdish forces that control the region. Defending his decision, Trump said it was “time for us to get out” and let others “figure the situation out.” But critics accused the President of abandoning the Kurds, U.S. allies whose forces were pivotal in the battle to defeat ISIS in Syria.

**REPUBLICAN REBELLION** Lawmakers in Trump’s own party criticized the President’s unexpected move. “We have sent the most dangerous signal possible—America is an unreliable ally,” said Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a close confidant of Trump’s. His fellow GOP Senators Marco Rubio and Mitt Romney highlighted the risks of ceding influence to Iran, whose proxy forces support Bashar Assad’s regime, and Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, a Trump loyalist, urged him to use “American leadership” and reverse course. Trump stuck by his decision, tweeting that he would instead apply economic pressure if Turkey crossed any lines.

**KURDS PLAYED** The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Kurdish-led group that allied with the U.S. to fight ISIS, called Trump’s decision a “stab in the back” and said they would defend their land “at all costs.” The SDF’s political wing said there would be “chaos once again” in Syria. Ankara views the main Kurdish militia within the SDF as indistinguishable from the militant Kurdistan Workers’ Party, which has fought a long insurgency against Turkey.

**PRISONER SWAP** Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has long lobbied for what on Oct. 9 became his country’s third incursion into Syrian territory since 2016. But Trump also said Turkey would assume responsibility for ISIS prisoners in Syria, worrying counterterrorism officials worldwide. The SDF controls over 24 detention facilities that hold 10,000 ISIS detainees, and a camp for 70,000 internally displaced people, including thousands of ISIS supporters. Turkey’s former foreign minister Yasar Yakis said oversight of ISIS detainees would be a “nightmare” for Ankara, and could provoke sleeper cells in Turkey to “wake up and wreak havoc.” —MADELINE ROACHE

#### NEWS TICKER

### Protests ahead of Bolivian election

Hundreds of thousands of people **marched in protest against left-wing Bolivian President Evo Morales**, calling for a stronger response to recent forest fires in the country. With elections scheduled for Oct. 20, polls show Morales may be forced into a runoff vote against a right-wing rival.

### School districts sue Juul

Three school districts across the U.S. sued Juul on Oct. 7, **saying the e-cigarette maker marketed its devices to children** and left districts with the resulting costs. Facing a public backlash over vaping health concerns, Juul’s CEO stepped down on Sept. 25, and the company suspended all U.S. advertising.

### U.S. diplomat’s wife flees U.K. after crash

On Oct. 7, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson called for Anne Sacoolas, wife of a U.S. diplomat, **to return to Britain for questioning about a crash** between the car she was allegedly driving and a motorcyclist, Harry Dunn, 19, who was killed. Johnson said he would raise the issue with President Trump.



## NEWS TICKER

### No health care? No visa, Trump says

Immigrants will be denied visas if they are **unable to prove they will be covered by health insurance** or can afford to pay their own medical expenses, according to an Oct. 4 Trump Administration announcement. The policy, effective on Nov. 3, is expected to lead to thousands of denied green cards.

### Church may let married men be priests

Some married men could be on their way to becoming Catholic priests, overturning centuries of tradition, after **Pope Francis on Oct. 6 opened a controversial summit at the Vatican**. The proposal was set to be discussed among a raft of other ideas aimed at confronting a shortage of priests in the Amazon region.

### September jobless rate drops to 3.5%

The U.S. unemployment rate fell by 0.2%, to 3.5%, **as the economy added 136,000 jobs in September**, according to numbers released by the Labor Department on Oct. 4. The report, which showed the lowest jobless rate since December 1969, comes amid recession fears for the U.S. economy.

## GOOD QUESTION

### How could Louisiana's SCOTUS case affect abortion in the U.S.?

WHEN THE U.S. SUPREME COURT ANNOUNCED on Oct. 4 that it plans to take up its first abortion case since the appointment of two new conservative justices, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, the news gave some court watchers déjà vu.

The case, *June Medical Services, LLC v. Gee*, is about a Louisiana law that requires doctors performing abortions to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. In 2016, the court reversed a Texas case involving admitting privileges in a 5-3 decision, saying reducing the pool of doctors permitted to conduct the procedure exerted an “undue burden” on a woman’s right to have an abortion. In the wake of the Texas ruling, the Supreme Court refused to hear similar challenges involving laws from Wisconsin and Mississippi but has agreed to consider a lower court’s finding that Louisiana’s law was different enough that it could stand, even if Texas’ was unconstitutional.

Louisiana attorney general Jeff Landry has applauded the decision, saying that the law is “designed to protect women.” Others, however, argue *June Medical Services* could have national implications not only for abortion, but also—because of its similarity to the Texas case—for the legitimacy of the court itself. “It’s quite shocking that they scheduled a hearing when you’ve got a very recent precedent,” says Lawrence Gostin, a Georgetown law professor.

Gostin believes that if the Supreme Court upholds the lower-court ruling, it will send two messages: that states are free to expand abortion restrictions beyond what was previously considered constitutional and that “if you change the political composition of the court, you can change constitutional rights.”

That composition has abortion-rights groups worried. “There’s only one reason the court would not strike down the Louisiana law, and that is because Justice Kennedy, who voted to protect abortion access just three years ago, has been replaced with Justice Kavanaugh,” said Alexis McGill Johnson, acting president and CEO of Planned Parenthood, in an Oct. 4 statement.

But what their verdict is will still come down to whether the Justices can distinguish this case from the Texas one. “They’ll have to do some rhetorical gymnastics” to do so, says Katherine Franke, director of the Center for Gender and Sexuality Law at Columbia Law School. To uphold Louisiana’s restrictions on abortion, they would have to highlight how the facts of each case are unique or else find that they got something wrong in the previous verdict. Otherwise, they would risk creating “the impression that the rule of law shifts with different Presidents.”

Franke, who believes there are no substantial factual differences between the cases, says taking that risk could have serious consequences. “Given the way Kavanaugh’s confirmation was so politicized, you would think the court would like to get out from under that shadow,” she says. “Politicizing this case will not help.” —SANYA MANSOOR

## SUCCESSION

### Royal reforms

Sweden’s King Carl XVI Gustaf removed royal titles from five of his grandchildren on Oct. 7, shrinking the royal house. Here, other regal revisions. —Rachael Bunyan

#### POWER DOWN

King Mohammed VI of Morocco dramatically reduced his own constitutional powers in June 2011, in response to the Arab Spring uprisings. He transferred executive powers to the office of Prime Minister.



#### LINE OF TAXATION

In June 2013, Belgium’s royal family had their incomes slashed and began paying income taxes for the first time, after the dowager Queen Fabiola was accused of attempting to evade inheritance taxes.

#### RANKING WOMEN

Female members of the U.K.’s royal family now take precedence in the line of succession over younger males, following a change in legislation in March 2015. The law also allowed royals to marry Catholics.



# Milestones

## DIED

Legendary mustachioed comedian **Rip Taylor**, on Oct. 6 at 88.

## WARNED

Facebook, by law-enforcement officials from the U.S., U.K. and Australia on Oct. 4, who said that the company's plans to **encrypt its messaging service** would make it harder for governments to stop criminals.

## KILLED

At least 30 civilians, including 14 children, by **U.S. airstrikes on alleged Taliban drug labs** in Afghanistan in May, according to an Oct. 9 U.N. report.

## HEARD

Arguments in a set of Supreme Court cases over **LGBTQ employment discrimination**, on Oct. 8.

## ARRESTED

Iranian Instagram personality Sahar Tabar, for **blasphemy, among other charges**. Photos of Tabar, who is famous for extensive cosmetic surgery, went viral in 2017.

## REJECTED

Arguments to stop Manhattan prosecutors from seeing **President Trump's tax returns**, by a federal judge, on Oct. 7. Trump's lawyers are appealing the decision.

## ERASED

Comedy Central **cartoon South Park**, from major streaming sites in China, after the show mocked Chinese censors. The show's creators issued a satirical apology on Oct. 7.



Carroll in the mid-1950s, around the time when she was introduced to audiences in *Carmen Jones*

## DIED

### Diahann Carroll

#### *Sophisticated star*

TODAY, WEARING GOWNS, JEWELS AND FURS HARDLY SEEMS like a radical act. But for Diahann Carroll, who died on Oct. 4 at 84, it was: in the early 1950s, when Carroll was just starting out as a nightclub singer, she cultivated an aura of elegance that endured for the rest of her life. At a time when images of African-American glamour were still relatively rare, Carroll stepped out with bravado, bringing confidence to others in the process.

And with her boldness, Carroll—who made her film debut in Otto Preminger's 1954 *Carmen Jones*—made the world pay attention. She was the first black actor to win a Tony for a leading role, for the 1962 musical *No Strings*. In 1974, she earned an Oscar nomination for Best Actress in John Berry's *Claudine*, as a determined single mother raising six children. Before that, she'd played another single mother on *Julia*, the first American TV series to focus on the life of a professional African-American woman; she won a Golden Globe for the role in 1969.

Having always radiated star quality and sophistication, Carroll amped it up even further in the mid-1980s as Dominique Devereaux on TV's *Dynasty*. A chanteuse and shrewd businesswoman decked out in all-white getups and flouncy furs, Devereaux out-classed everyone in her orbit. Carroll made sure she had dignity—but it was always dignity with dazzle. —STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

## DIED

### Ginger Baker

#### *Rock god*

By Stewart Copeland

BEFORE GINGER BAKER, THE drums were a very simple instrument providing a very simple ingredient to pop music, which was the beat. The drummer's job was to be one of the handsome guys on the album cover. Then Ginger Baker—who died on Oct. 6 at 80—came along and threw in all kinds of stuff that was much more sophisticated.

Musicians will argue about the dividing line between rock and pop, but I think Baker—and his band Cream—was it. The difference was the power and the musicianship. In Cream, Eric Clapton, bassist Jack Bruce and Baker were all mightily proficient; Baker was all about power. Hearing his thumpy drums is one of the reasons I picked up sticks myself. They sounded so strong—it was the sound of adult masculinity, which is what every 13-year-old boy yearns for.

He always described himself as a jazz musician, but I never bought that. Amid my properly obsequious interactions, I couldn't help rattling his cage about the jazz thing. I would say, "Dude, get over it. You are a rock god."

**Copeland** was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as the drummer for the Police





# A NEW APPROACH TO HER NEXT CHAPTER

YVONNE CAVANAUGH'S RETIREMENT PRIORITIES INCLUDE STAYING HEALTHY SO SHE CAN INDULGE HER LOVE OF TRAVEL



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When Yvonne Cavanaugh, 60, retired nearly three years ago, she finally had something she'd lacked in the past: free time for traveling and exploring. Raising two kids as a single mother and working long hours as an office manager for a large law firm had left little time for personal pursuits. But these days, her children are grown and Yvonne has more time to travel with her husband, John, an old friend whom she recently married after reconnecting nearly a decade ago.

She and John have taken cruises to Belize and Mexico, driven their motorhome to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and explored the U.S Virgin Islands. "When we travel, it's all outdoors and food for us," Yvonne says. "We plan our trip, research the destination, and then hit the ground running every morning."

Knowing in advance what sights to see helps Yvonne and John get the most out of their trip. Most recently, the couple spent two weeks on a road trip around Ireland, touring destinations such as Blarney Castle and the majestic Cliffs of Moher. They tried different restaurants every night and savored the seafood—and the locally brewed stouts. Yvonne had planned the trip as a birthday present for John, and spent months mapping out their itinerary with the help of an Irish travel agent. "It was one of the coolest places I've ever been," says Yvonne. "We loved the history behind it all."

After returning home, Yvonne started suffering intense pain in her wrists and hands—and worried the discomfort would mean scaling back her travel plans. Yvonne was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome, but fortunately, acupuncture and other treatments helped reduce the sharp pain and swelling in her hands. "Once the pain was gone, I told myself that I didn't ever want it to come back."

Thanks to the care she had access to through her Blue Cross Blue Shield coverage, she learned to manage her symptoms, which lets her spend more time thinking about her next trip—and where she and John will eat. "We want to go to Greece," she says. "Mediterranean food is my absolute favorite." After taking her health into her own hands, Yvonne is ready to keep exploring.

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## In Donald Trump's America, **Justin Amash** sets an independent course

By **Lissandra Villa/Grand Rapids, Mich.**

JUSTIN AMASH IS SIPPING WATER AT A MOVIE-theater bar in Grand Rapids, Mich. It smells like popcorn, there are neon lights everywhere, and *Remember the Titans* is playing silently on wall-mounted TVs. A steady trickle of people pass by, but none seem to recognize their Congressman, a thin guy in a polo shirt, khakis and wiry glasses topped with a pair of Eugene Levy eyebrows.

If the Congressman keeps a low profile, it's not because of his decisions. In May, after reading the Mueller report, he became the only Republican in the House to say President Donald Trump had engaged in behavior that met "the threshold for impeachment," and in July, he announced he was leaving the Republican Party and running for re-election in his Michigan district as an independent. As national Republicans continue to defend Trump, Amash has become something of a unicorn—and is risking his seat along the way.

"I want people to see that I was a Congressman who followed a consistent set of principles, upheld the Constitution and didn't bow to pressure," he says. "That I stuck by what I thought was right, regardless of how difficult it would make anything."

His decision to leave his party on July 4 came months before the biggest news story in American politics broke. In September, House Democrats formally announced they would pursue an impeachment inquiry into Trump, centered on whether the President asked a foreign government to investigate one of his top political rivals. As congressional Republicans have circled the wagons around Trump, Amash has spoken out critically. He called the summary of the call between Trump and the President of Ukraine "highly incriminating," and indicted most Republican attempts to defend Trump as "an effort to gaslight America."

Amash's moves aren't necessarily surprising to those familiar with his tenure in Congress. A pugnacious conservative who drafted the original mission statement for the House Freedom Caucus, Amash has long had a reputation for being the Lego beneath the foot of Republican leadership.

But being the dissident is also risky. Loathed by the GOP establishment and estranged from his former allies in the Freedom Caucus, Amash now must reintroduce himself to his constituents in a district that went for Trump in 2016. Suddenly,

### AMASH QUICK FACTS

#### A thorn in the side

A former House Freedom Caucus member, Amash has long had a reputation for refusing to fall in line behind leadership.

#### Gaslighting

Amash tweeted in September that most Republican efforts to defend Trump amounted to "an effort to gaslight America."

#### What's next?

Amash won't rule out a presidential bid, but for now he is running for re-election in his district.

after five straight election victories, Amash's re-election campaign is a toss-up. It's a race that will test the price of principle in Trump's America.

**BY AMASH'S OWN TELLING**, he's matured during his time in Congress. On the late-August day that we met, he reflected on his past partisanship. "I just think if President Obama were saying the kinds of things President Trump is saying, and this were several years ago, I would have been a lot harder on Obama," he says. "And I don't think there's anyone in either party for whom that's not true."

Trained as a lawyer, Amash worked for a Michigan law firm before joining his family's tool business. At 28, he was elected to the state legislature, where he earned the nickname Mr. No: he's anti-abortion, pro-Second Amendment and a committed fiscal hawk (though he voted for the Republican tax bill in 2017). Two years later, he won his seat in Washington as a freshman member of the House, where he continued to ruffle feathers. In 2012, he was ousted from the House Budget Committee after voting against fellow Republican Paul Ryan's proposed budget.

In the 2014 cycle, Amash's habit of defying the Republican establishment earned him a primary challenger, Brian Ellis, who was backed by a pack of heavy hitters, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Right to Life of Michigan. Ellis ran an ad calling Amash, whose father is a Palestinian refugee and mother is a Syrian immigrant, "al-Qaeda's best friend in Congress." Amash won handily, let Ellis' concession call go to voice mail and demanded an apology. Later, Amash and the Freedom Caucus were instrumental in pushing Speaker of the House John Boehner into early retirement.

When Trump came around, Amash expected that he and his conservative colleagues would continue to act as an independent faction in Congress, keeping both their party and their President in check. Instead he watched as his peers fell in line behind the President. Last year, after former Representative Mark Sanford, another Trump critic, lost his congressional primary, Trump insulted Sanford in a closed-door meeting with Republicans on Capitol Hill. At a dinner later that night, Amash pleaded with the Freedom Caucus to defend Sanford, the *Washington Post* first reported. But no one wanted to confront Trump. Sanford recalls his fellow members "sheepishly looking the other way."

"I think that [Amash] has represented something of the conscience of the conservative movement within the Republican Party," Sanford told me. "He always stood for true north, whether that meant he was fighting alone or with a group of others. I think he's ahead of his time." In June, Amash quit the Freedom Caucus.





“Of all the years I’ve been in office, I’m the happiest now,” he says of his new independence. “It’s very freeing to not feel bound to a particular party.”

**THE 2020 BATTLE** is on in Amash’s district in western Michigan, where both Democrats and Republicans are already deep into primary season. While state political operatives say a front runner has yet to emerge, there are at least five Republican candidates seeking the nomination to challenge Amash. The list includes Peter Meijer, a veteran whose wealthy family owns a Michigan-based grocery chain, and Jim Lower, a state legislator who jumped into the race after Amash expressed openness to impeaching Trump earlier this year. Michael Meyers, a state GOP operative working with Republican candidate Lynn Afendoulis, says Amash has his work cut out for him in his re-election bid. “I think this boils down to a Congressman that has always thought that he was right and that everyone else was wrong,” he says. “And that has cost him most of his friendships and most of his relationships in the community.”

Then there’s the other question that hangs over

**‘Of all the years I’ve been in office, I’m the happiest now.’**

JUSTIN AMASH, on leaving the Republican Party to become an independent

Amash’s political future: whether he will run for President in 2020 as a conservative alternative to Trump. “If I feel like I can go on the national stage and help advance the kind of things I’m talking about, then that’s something I’ll definitely consider,” he told me. “I’m not going to rule that kind of thing out.”

Amash says people from both sides of the aisle have told him they hope he succeeds, if only to show that breaking free of the two-party structure can work. By leaving the Republicans, Amash says, he has expanded his ability to speak to a broader group of voters, many of whom might not listen if he were the GOP’s man.

I ask what he sees as his new role in Washington, and he doesn’t miss a beat. “Setting an example for people,” he says. “Talking about how things should work in Washington. Talking about how things should work at home.” He said his fellow politicians would benefit from thinking independently rather than taking blind cues from leadership. His job, he said, is to “go spread that message, and use all of my influence and skills to do that.” □





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# LightBox

WORLD

## Hong Kong's latest attempt to rein in protests backfires

NEARLY EVERY PROTESTER TRUDGING through driving rain in Hong Kong on Oct. 6 wore a mask, in defiance of the government's new ban on face coverings at public assemblies.

Two days earlier, Hong Kong's Beijing-backed leader Carrie Lam had invoked sweeping, colonial-era emergency powers to introduce the anti-mask law. Instead of deterring the pro-democracy movement that has rocked the semiautonomous region for four months, the ban ignited fierce backlash. Police and protesters sparred over three consecutive days.

Demonstrators are now increasingly directing their ire at the mainland, taking to the streets in sneakers and black clothing to call for the end of China's Communist Party. With politics deadlocked, many fear violence will continue to escalate. Under pressure from Beijing to end the protests, police have loosened rules around firing live ammunition. Officers under attack shot and critically injured two teenagers in early October. Hard-liners sporting Guy Fawkes masks have carried out mob beatings and thrown gasoline bombs and bricks at police. Yet the public supports the protesters' demands.

Many within the movement suspect the government had invited a violent response in order to drive a wedge between peaceful and radical protesters. On the streets, they pledged to stay united. "No matter what happens," said demonstrator Kelly, 25, "we won't split."

—LAIGNEE BARRON/HONG KONG

*A demonstrator echoes the latest protest slogan—"Hong Kongers, resist!"—in graffiti sprayed during an Oct. 6 march*

PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD R. DARLING—POLARIS

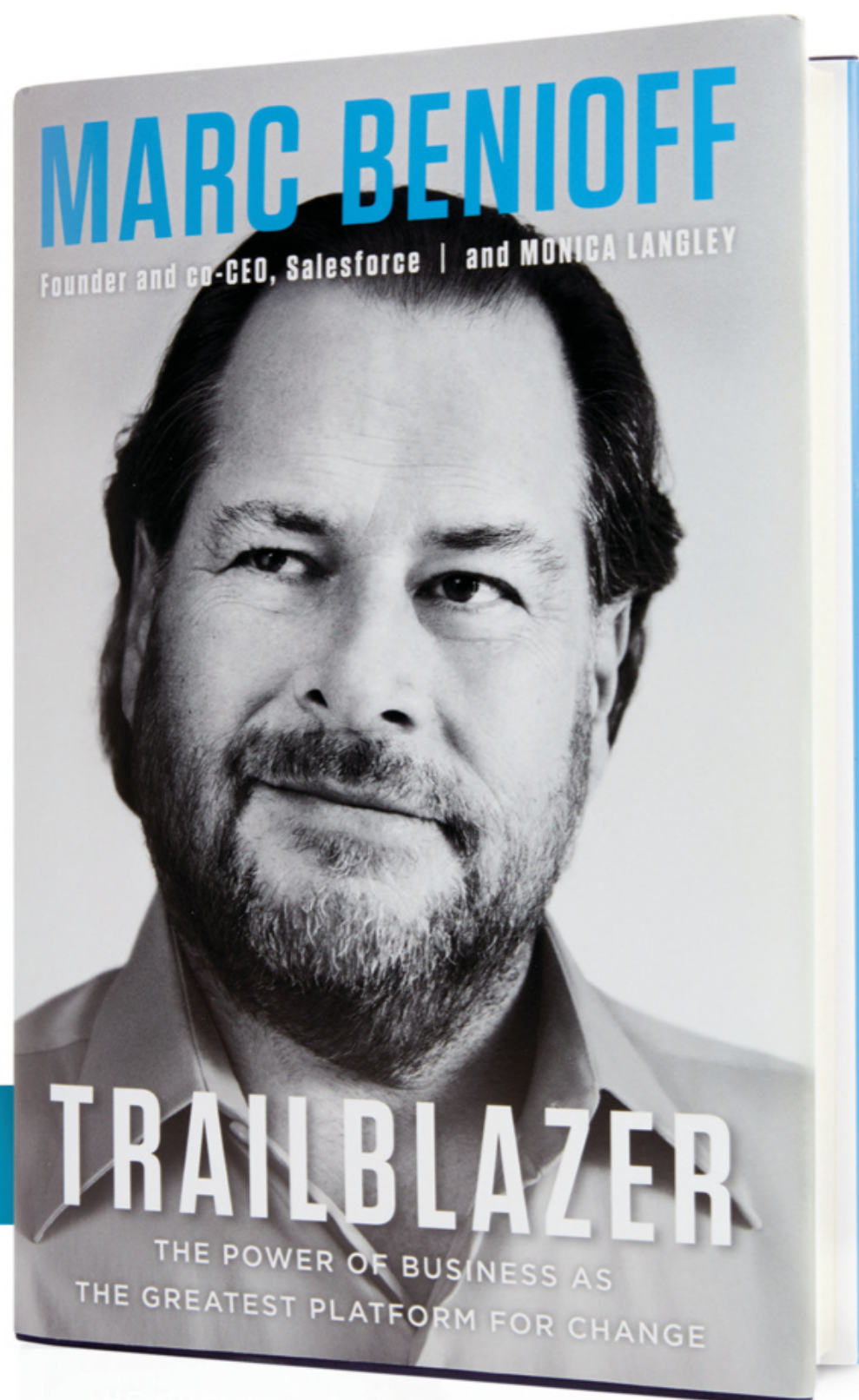
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# TheView

NATION

## **SURVIVORS ARE ALSO VOTERS**

By Tarana Burke

This month marks the two-year anniversary of the #MeToo hashtag, but it also marks the start of a monumental shift. In just a few hours, sexual violence, including harassment, went from a topic seldom discussed on mainstream platforms to one that dominated headlines and affected everything from pop culture to policy debates. ▶

### INSIDE

CHINA EXPOSES THE NBA'S  
HYPOCRISY

MELINDA GATES' \$1 BILLION  
COMMITMENT

FAILURE OF THE DIVERSITY  
INDUSTRY



# TheView Opener

On Oct. 15, 2017, Alyssa Milano asked her Twitter followers to reply “me too” if they had been sexually harassed or assaulted, a reference to the Me Too campaign I started in 2006. For millions, it was the first time they were invited to open up about the trauma their experiences with sexual violence had caused. For hundreds of thousands, it was the start of a much needed conversation about safety in our workplaces, neighborhoods and communities. And for a few hundred, it meant a disruption in the harmful, toxic behavior they were engaged in, using the various seats of power they held.

What happened two years ago was a historic and critical part of one of the most significant movements in the world, but we know it didn’t result in the kind of major shift in culture that the movement needs—the kind where not only laws and policies change but individuals also feel a sense of responsibility to survivors for the harm that has been done and for the bodily autonomy they all deserve. It was a consciousness-stirring moment, but it’s not enough to create awareness. What matters is what we do next.

**THE U.S. IS** just over a year away from the most consequential election in decades, and not one remaining presidential candidate has prioritized addressing sexual violence as a platform issue. (Kirsten Gillibrand was vocal about it, but she’s no longer in the race.)

We, as survivors, aren’t just people looking for services. We are a constituency looking for change. We are working people, taxpayers and consumers who push through our trauma every day, despite being triggered and erased by a world that tells us our healing isn’t important. It’s been only two years since the movement began to shed light on the behavior of wealthy and powerful predators, but we’ve already witnessed many of them return to and continue their daily lives without much consequence or repercussions.

Candidates have a responsibility to address the rampant sexual violence that permeates all of society’s systems and structures, including government. If we are talking

about sexual violence as a public-health crisis—and with more than 19 million respondents to the #MeToo hashtag in the first year alone, and a record numbers of calls at rape crisis hotlines across the country, I feel confident doing so—then it should be talked about with the same seriousness as other topics that have received far more attention. Policies around race, immigration and health care have rightfully taken center stage during the recent presidential debates, but something as prevalent as sexual violence, an issue spanning and intersecting with all of the above, has been largely overlooked.

Sexual violence is a national problem that deserves a national response. If we are invested in the outcome of this movement that we’ve built, then we must ensure that it remains part of the conversation.

With no presidential candidate that seems

willing to truly and publicly grapple with this bipartisan issue, we must once again raise our voices. We must demand that the men and women who want to represent us in the White House and other political offices speak directly to and respond to our needs. And we

must be clear that we are ready to vote for accountability in 2020. We deserve a country that values our safety, since its health and prosperity depends on our well-being.

I am one person who saw a problem and tried my best to ignore it. I tried to ignore it when it happened to me, I tried to ignore it when it happened to folks in my family and I tried to ignore it when I saw it ripping my community apart. I tried and tried until the part of my heart that has a passion for justice could not ignore it any longer. Today none of us can justify ignoring it.

Two years ago, millions of Americans bravely raised their hands to say that their lives had been affected by the scourge that is sexual violence. Their hands are still raised while we wait for our candidates to answer a question that hasn’t even been raised yet: What about Me Too?

*Burke is the founder of the Me Too movement*



*Presidential candidates have not prioritized sexual violence as a campaign issue*

## SHORT READS

► Highlights  
from stories on  
[time.com/ideas](https://time.com/ideas)

### Shining a light

Selena Gomez knew she might face criticism when she signed on to executive-produce a show about undocumented immigrants, but that didn’t stop her.

**“Immigration goes beyond politics and headlines,” she writes. “It is a human issue, affecting real people, dismantling real lives.”**

### Too close for comfort

Although President Trump is at the center of the impeachment inquiry, Martin London, who represented former Vice President Spiro Agnew, says Vice President Mike Pence should worry too. **“It becomes reasonable to consider that it could be President Pelosi who will deliver the next State of the Union address,” he writes.**

### Divide and conquer

When Eve Rodsky realized her husband did not appreciate the extra work she was doing for their family, she created a system to ensure they split responsibilities fairly.

**“Only when you both believe that your time is equally valuable will the division of labor shift toward parity in your relationship,” she writes in *Fair Play*.**





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# TheView Opener

## THE RISK REPORT

### China has the NBA in a full-court press

By Ian Bremmer



ON OCT. 4, DARYL Morey—general manager of the NBA’s Houston Rockets—hit send on a tweet expressing solidarity with pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong. He didn’t do this in an official NBA capacity; his tweet nevertheless set off a firestorm in China, which promptly set off alarms at NBA headquarters in New York City. Morey took down the tweet, and to contain the fallout, the NBA issued two press releases, one in English and one in Chinese that was decidedly more apologetic. It’s as if NBA officials were unaware that the Internet exists in 2019.

Uproar ensued, in both China and the U.S. China said it would halt broadcasting and streaming Rockets games. Chinese sponsors have followed suit in cutting ties with the team, among other measures. It was an entirely predictable Chinese response to unwanted foreign criticism.

FOR U.S. FANS, the NBA was supposed to be better than this; the NBA has a strong record when it comes to supporting its personnel’s speaking their minds. Enes Kanter, center for the Boston Celtics, once called Turkey’s President “the Hitler of our century.” When he decided to skip a game in London out of security concerns, NBA commissioner Adam Silver backed the decision, saying, “I support Enes as a player in this league, and I support the platform the players have.” Turkish broadcaster S Sport decided not to televise last year’s Western Conference finals because they featured Kanter, then a member of the Portland Trail Blazers. Kanter remains in the NBA.

But Turkey is not the market China is. The NBA supports the free speech of its players and personnel when it costs little, but not when \$4 billion is on the line. The

league’s position may be a hypocritical approach, but this is a fight the league just can’t win. The NBA has spent years trying to balance its values while making inroads into China’s 1.4 billion-strong consumer market. China has been forcing companies to toe Beijing’s political line for far longer. *South Park* took on Chinese censorship in a recent episode; the show has been effectively banned there since. For a show built on taking swipes at all different kinds of authorities, it’s the cost of doing business. Businesses not built on irreverence are typically forced to fire people for these sorts of transgressions.

**If the NBA wants access to the Chinese market, it will now need to play by Chinese rules, and in today’s world those rules don’t just stop at China’s borders**

Silver eventually got around to saying the right thing, albeit too late to head off the crisis. “It is inevitable that people around the world ... will have different viewpoints over different issues. It is not the role of the NBA to adjudicate those differences. However, the NBA will not put itself in a position of regulating what players, employees and team owners say or will not say on these issues.” An admirable sentiment, but one that’s increasingly incompatible with business realities for a global brand in 2019 (or with even one more pro-Hong Kong tweet from the NBA).

As a league, the NBA never should have waded into this political fight. If the NBA wants access to the Chinese market, it will now need to play by Chinese rules, and in today’s world those rules don’t just stop at China’s borders. While plenty in the league have expressed support for Morey, you can bet that no one affiliated with the NBA will again publicly support protests in Hong Kong without thinking twice.

Hong Kong is far from the only hot-button issue for China. Further from the spotlight is the Uighur population of China’s western Xinjiang province, Muslims who have been victims of harsh and systematic oppression for many years. The NBA has not yet offered comment. □

## NATION

### A \$1 billion pledge to boost gender equality

For most of our history, women’s absence from positions of power and influence wasn’t newsworthy; it was normal. That we’re now talking about these inequities is a sign of progress. But there is no reason to believe this moment will last forever.

That’s why, over the next 10 years, I am committing \$1 billion to expanding women’s power and influence in the U.S. My company, Pivotal Ventures, will focus on three priorities: dismantling the barriers to women’s professional advancement; fast-tracking women in sectors with outsize impact on our society, like technology, media and politics; and giving shareholders, consumers and employees the data required to put pressure on companies and organizations to change.

Although \$1 billion is a lot of money, it’s only a small fraction of what’s necessary. That’s why I hope the commitment I’m making is seen as both a vote of confidence in the experts and advocates already working on these issues and an invitation for others to join the cause. Equality can’t wait, and no one in a position to act should either.

—Melinda Gates



Gates at the French Economy Minister’s office in January 2019



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## Diversity has become a booming business. So where are the results?

By Pamela Newkirk

FACING BACKLASH IN FEBRUARY OVER A SWEATER THAT looked like blackface, Gucci followed a now predictable course. Company officials apologized for appearing to mine demeaning imagery from the past; hired a global diversity czar, who is African American; and vowed to create multicultural scholarships and a more diverse workforce. Burberry announced similar efforts after it showed a hoodie that looked like a noose the same month, and Prada did the same in 2018 after it had unveiled a line of figurines that also resembled blackface.

This is not just the playbook of the fashion industry. Dozens of companies and institutions have sought to deflect controversy over embarrassing missteps or revelations of homogeneous boards and workplaces by launching high-profile initiatives or enlisting a person of color for a prominent post.

In 2003, MIT professor Thomas Kochan noted that companies were spending an estimated \$8 billion a year on diversity efforts. But since Trump's election, and with the emergence of movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, the industry has exploded. A 2019 survey of 234 companies in the S&P 500 found that 63% of the diversity professionals had been appointed or promoted to their roles during the past three years. In March 2018, the job site Indeed reported that postings for diversity and inclusion professionals had risen 35% in the previous two years.

The lucrative industry shows few signs of waning—from the spike in well-compensated diversity consultants and czars; to online courses and degree programs at prestigious schools; to professional organizations and conferences; to the commissioning of ever more studies, task forces and climate surveys. The buzzword is emblazoned on blogs and books and boot camps, and Thomson Reuters, a multinational mass-media and information firm, even created a Diversity and Inclusion Index to assess the practices of more than 5,000 publicly traded companies globally.

But while business targeting diversity is flourishing, diversity is not.

**PEOPLE OF COLOR**—who make up nearly 40% of the U.S. population—remain acutely underrepresented in most influential fields. From 2009 to 2018 the percentage of black law partners inched up from 1.7% to 1.8%. From 1985 to 2016, the proportion of black men in management at U.S. companies with 100 or more employees barely budged—from 3% to 3.2%. People of color held about 16% of *Fortune* 500 board seats in 2018. A 2018 survey of the 15 largest public fashion and apparel companies found that nonwhites held only 11% of board seats and that nearly three-quarters of company CEOs were white men. And in the top 200 film releases of 2017, minorities accounted for 7.8% of writers, 12.6% of directors and 19.8% of lead roles.



A look at higher education—where, in fall 2017, 81% of full-time professors at degree-granting postsecondary schools were white while just 3% were Hispanic and 4% were black—is helpful in understanding the forces that allow these disparities to persist. Though the 1960s saw the introduction of affirmative-action policies intended to address the history of slavery followed by centuries of discrimination against people of color, decades of legal challenges have undermined these measures. Since 1978, for example, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* has prohibited institutions from using racial quotas or other remedies to address past discrimination.

Because of this decision, says Columbia University president Lee Bollinger, who as president of the University of Michigan was named in two lawsuits in which white students who'd been denied admission claimed reverse discrimination, "we're deprived of the context that gave it a sense of mission. Every college leader is told, 'Do not refer to history.'"

In recent years, "diversity" has been touted as a feel-good exercise that includes everything from gender to sexual





orientation to body size. But while we should be concerned about discrimination against any group, the term has become such a catchall that we've lost focus on the original intent of anti-discrimination efforts. "There hasn't been enough pushback on the abstraction of diversity," Bollinger says.

What's more, many whites now claim they are being disenfranchised as others are afforded undue advantage. A 2017 NPR poll found that 55% of white Americans believe that white people are discriminated against, while, tellingly, a lower percentage said they had actually experienced discrimination. Moreover, renewed calls for diversity are playing out against resurgent white nationalism; a rise in bias crimes; and a President who has denigrated Mexicans, Muslims and blacks, among other groups.

Although the worsening racial climate appears to power the diversity industry, a number of studies suggest that these initiatives can actually make matters worse by triggering racial resentment. Think of the Google engineer who was fired for writing a memo deriding the company's diversity efforts. He

went on to file a class action claiming Google discriminates against conservative white men before ultimately moving to arbitration.

**FOR DIVERSITY TO BECOME** a reality in the nation's workplaces, companies and institutions need to do more than recycle costly and ineffectual initiatives. Cyrus Mehri, a civil rights lawyer who successfully litigated discrimination lawsuits against major corporations including Coca-Cola and Texaco, says companies need to analyze metrics related to hiring, pay, promotions and bonuses along racial and gender lines to detect and disrupt patterns of bias.

"Everybody is quick to do unconscious-bias training and not interventions," says Mehri, who, with the late civil rights lawyer Johnnie Cochran, is credited with devising the NFL's Rooney Rule, which requires a diverse slate of candidates for coaching and front-office jobs. "When you keep choosing the options on the menu that don't create change, you're purposely not creating change," he says.

To wit, *A Leader's Guide: Finding and Keeping Your Next Chief Diversity Officer*, a report published this year by the consulting firm Russell Reynolds Associates, stated that more than half of diversity professionals do not have the resources or support needed to execute programs and strategies. Only 35% had access to company demographic metrics, and a survey of 1,800-plus company executives found that diversity ranked last on a list of eight potential business priorities.

But persistent failure appears not to have prompted many institutions to change course. Although Google reportedly spent \$114 million on its diversity program in 2014, its diversity report this year showed that blacks made up just 3.3% of the workforce and held 2.1% of tech and 2.6% of leadership roles.

Why do companies spend so much to achieve so little? Lauren B. Edelman, a professor of law and sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the author of *Working Law: Courts, Corporations and Symbolic Civil Rights*, found

that courts tend to look for symbolic structures of diversity rather than their efficacy. In other words, the diversity apparatus doesn't have to work—it just has to exist—and it can help shield a company against successful bias lawsuits, which are already difficult to win.

Misan Sagay, a black filmmaker and member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, says more attention also must be paid to what happens once people of color are hired. "A lot of the times they want our physical presence but not our voice," she says, explaining that real change begins with the composition of the studio executives who greenlight projects. "There should be some brown faces when I'm pitching," she says. "Until there's diversity at every level, I doubt filmmakers of color will be on a level playing field."

True progress won't come without discomfort, says Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, which allocates hundreds of millions of dollars annually to efforts promoting equality. "It requires incumbent leaders and managers to change their behavior and practices," he says. "It means that institutions have to

change incentive structures and to fundamentally interrogate their own behavior." Walker adds that this is not just a conservative problem, as many purportedly progressive fields, like fashion and entertainment, also lack diversity.

In the end, racial diversity will not be ushered in by pledges, slogans or czars. It will be achieved only once white America is weaned off a prevailing narrative of racial pre-eminence, which can still be glimpsed in historical narratives, film and literature, and in racially offensive iconography like blackface. The seeds of this corrosive ideology are planted early, and a paradigm shift will require courageous leadership. Yes, change will require resources and resolve, but no amount of money will succeed alongside a willful negation of our shared humanity.

# 84%

of people who held  
Fortune 500 board seats  
in 2018 were white

*Newkirk is the author of Diversity, Inc.: The Failed Promise of a Billion-Dollar Business*



# Trump and the



*President Trump speaks at a rally in a hangar at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, on Dec. 26, 2018*





# Troops

AN IMPULSIVE PRESIDENT  
SHOWS NO INCLINATION TO USE  
THE FORCES HE CELEBRATES  
BY JAMES STAVRIDIS



## Some time ago, a young combat veteran I've been mentoring for years sent me a troubling email.

His unit was considering holding a significant ceremony at a property controlled by President Trump's company. Given the recent public concerns about Air Force flight crews staying at a Trump hotel in the U.K., this young officer felt the appearance of enriching the Commander in Chief's corporate pockets with Department of Defense funding was wrong. That is correct. But what is deeply disturbing is that he had to wrestle with these moral and ethical questions regarding his chain of command. He should be concentrating on preparing for combat operations.

At the highest levels of the military, these same political concerns are manifesting themselves in everything from hiding a Navy vessel, the U.S.S. *John S. McCain*, for fear of offending the President, to the current controversy over American military aid to Ukraine, which the President possibly held up in an attempt to pressure the Ukrainian government into investigating a political rival. For our military, this kind of intrusion of domestic politics into national security is concerning.

Trump's relationship with the military is an odd mix. He was a cadet at a military academy who then avoided combat service in Vietnam through a controversial diagnosis of bone spurs. Counterintuitively, he enjoys a high percentage of support within military ranks (especially among enlisted men). His widely reported adulterous affairs and on-camera denials about paying off porn stars are behaviors that would destroy any military career, but he also seems to respect the military ethos deeply, always behaving very respectfully when around senior military officers. I was interviewed about a possible Cabinet post in December 2016 at Trump Tower, and the then President-elect was respectful and personable, despite the fact that I had been vetted for Vice President by Hillary Clinton. And he peppered his Cabinet and closest advisers with "my generals"—Kelly, Flynn, McMaster, Mattis, Kellogg—although most of them have since been discarded in frustration.

He works military themes into his long campaign speeches, including his support for big defense spending. He is clearly aware of the domestic political advantage that wrapping himself in the banner of the military—America's most trusted institution—affords him. The President's base generally reveres the military, and the loudest cheers at his rallies are often for the armed forces. Also, he knows military votes matter with millions of active-duty personnel, reservists and veterans who turn out for elections.

**AT THE MOST BASIC LEVEL**, the Trump strategic approach ensures a military that is well funded and combat-ready. Under him the Pentagon produced a reasonably effective National Defense Strategy. That strategy is notable for its pivot to emphasizing an emerging era of great-power competition



after almost two decades of a counterterrorism strategy in the wake of 9/11. Both China and Russia are increasing their military capability, and Trump—despite his seeming personal affinity for Vladimir Putin—has been supportive of directing U.S. military readiness toward preparing for potential conflicts with them.

Another clear element of the Trump strategy is to push our allies to spend more on their defense, thus reducing the burden on the U.S. This strategy has produced an uptick in defense spending in Europe, although whether the NATO allies will in fact meet their pledge to hit the goal of 2% of GDP remains to be seen. Elsewhere, defense spending by allies and partners is rising in Asia (driven mainly by concerns about Chinese spending, particularly on the part of Japan and Australia) and the Middle East (where Iran's bellicose behavior has had an effect, especially on the Israelis).

Operationally, the Trump strategy appears to

## As 2020 approaches, Trump will likely seek to avoid a war





be “Talk loudly but avoid brandishing your stick.” The President talks tough on international challenges, saying things like he would destroy Iran or rain “fire and fury” on North Korea, but he generally seeks to minimize actually using the military, believing that the American public wants an end to the conflicts of the past two decades. In terms of China, the Administration continues to launch provocative “freedom of navigation” patrols in the South China Sea but has not taken more aggressive military action. Against Russia, the Trump approach seems to be supporting NATO by putting more troops in Europe (at least on a rotational basis and in nations toward which he feels personally well disposed, like Poland). He also tends to move impulsively with little military consultation or interagency advice, as he did in apparently pulling troops back in Syria after a phone call with the Turkish President—to the shock of the Pentagon and our allies in the region.

Related to this, he seems to seek grand bargains that he can categorize as resulting from his personal engagement in the diplomatic process. This has certainly been the approach with North Korea and his “beautiful letter”—writing to close friend Kim Jong Un. Trump has also mused about meeting with President Rouhani of Iran, an approach that was abruptly rebuffed

^  
*Armored vehicles in Ghazni, Afghanistan, in August 2018 bear stencils of Donald Trump and Mel Gibson*

by the Iranians. The President appears to want a trade deal before the 2020 elections in the U.S. and seems willing to put security concerns on a back burner while seeking such an accord. Trump will certainly continue to try to reduce U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan. His strategy ignores the national-security implications of climate change.

In terms of military technology, the President is personally disengaged, appearing content to allow his Defense Department to take the lead on procurement. Trump has touted arms sales to various nations (Saudi Arabia, Japan and others) as good business for the U.S., and he seems willing to provide technology transfers to sell such deals.

**WHILE TRUMP’S USE** of the military is largely conventional, much of what passes for strategy from the White House is oriented toward what will benefit his re-election campaign. As 2020 approaches, Trump will likely seek to avoid a shooting war, consummate one or two diplomatic successes that can be categorized as avoiding conflict (especially with North Korea and possibly Venezuela) and push for continued military spending. He will undoubtedly continue to wrap himself in the military—and he won’t be the first President to do so.

But the worry going forward is that the bitter, partisan tone of Washington will begin to bleed into our military. The debates that are likely to unfold over the use of military aid to Ukraine as a domestic political tool will seep into day-to-day conversations on warships, in hangar bays and on training ranges. Young military officers shouldn’t have to wrestle with the ethics of a paid event at a Trump property, and admirals and generals shouldn’t have to constantly assess how they can avoid the maelstrom of politics. Over time, even given the best efforts of the professional military, there will be corrosion in the chain of command and wasted energy dealing with these issues.

I gave a speech in New York City about a year ago, and an elderly member of the audience asked me an unsettling question: “Admiral, things seem to be going to hell in a handbasket these days. When is the military going to do something about it?” I was shocked into silence for a few seconds before I said that America’s military has no role in domestic politics nor any inclination ever to have one. That foundational element in our republic can be counted upon, no matter the political pressure—an important certainty in the age of Trump. But we need to be mindful of the difficult environment in which our military operates as the fierce winds of politics blow in this angry season.

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*Admiral Stavridis (ret.) was the 16th Supreme Allied Commander for NATO and is an operating executive at the Carlyle Group*



**MATTHEW POBLANO, 17**  
**BAY SHORE, N.Y.**

*"I applied for Naval ROTC and didn't get accepted. I still wanted to be an officer. My recruiter told me that I could enlist and then go to college as a reservist and become an officer afterward ... All Marines know that they're war fighters. You join knowing that if you have to go to war, you go."*







# Born Into War

THE WAY TO END AMERICA'S FOREVER  
WARS IS TO BRING BACK THE DRAFT

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BY ELLIOT ACKERMAN

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILLIAN LAUB FOR TIME



## Around Memorial Day each year, I take my children to Arlington National Cemetery.

I've got friends buried there, and I think the best way to tend to their memory is to tell my kids stories about them. Who knows, maybe when my kids are grown up, they'll pass some of those stories down to their own kids. I try not to take them on Memorial Day itself, as it is packed, so usually we wind up there after school the week before. Two years ago on our visit, a detachment from the Old Guard—the ceremonial troops who work at Arlington—was lined up in formation behind a riderless horse and caisson. My kids asked me what was going on, and I explained that the soldiers were preparing for a funeral.

As I told this to my daughter, I caught myself staring across the Potomac, toward downtown Washington. Observing the indifferent afternoon hustle, a sadness came over me. But I was with my kids, so I shook it off. We visited a few more graves, I told a few more stories. Then we left.

On the drive home my daughter asked if someday she would *have* to fight in a war.

"Only if you *want* to, kiddo," I answered, but could feel my response stick in my throat.

I then glanced into the rearview mirror, at that little sliver of her face that was just her eyes, and I watched as she tried to understand the difference.

**2019 MARKS THE FIRST YEAR** someone born after 9/11 will be eligible to enlist in the armed forces to potentially serve in Afghanistan or another theater in the global war on terror. Never before in our history has an American been able to fight in a war that is older than they are. Currently our civil-military divide is arguably as wide as it has ever been. The burden of nearly two decades of war—nearly 7,000 dead and more than 50,000 wounded—has been largely sustained by 1% of our population. From Somalia to Syria, American forces are engaged in combat. With recent military

### It's been 18 years

since 9/11. This year marks the first that someone can enlist to fight in a war that's older than they are. I traveled with Gillian Laub to Parris Island, S.C., to speak with new Marines about why they decided to serve.

—Elliot Ackerman



**MOHAMED ABDELHALIM, 17**  
QUEENS, N.Y.

*"My father is a commercial pilot. I decided to join the Marine Corps because it's more of a challenge, and it will help me become disciplined on my way to becoming a pilot. My dad did want me to do the Air Force, but it had to be the Marines."*









# Nation

posturing against Iran, against North Korea, it is also easy to imagine our country sleepwalking into another major theater war. To avoid those outcomes—a major theater war, the continuance of our “terror wars,” the attendant loss of life—we must move the issues of war and peace from the periphery of our national discourse to its center. And the only way to do that, I increasingly believe, is to reconsider the draft.

Congress has also taken a renewed interest in the draft, having created in 2016 a bipartisan National Commission on Military, National and Public Service charged with two missions. The first is to determine “whether the Selective Service registration requirement should be extended to include women”—this in light of the 2015 reforms that allow women unrestricted military service. The second is to “explor[e] whether the government should require all Americans to serve in some capacity as part of their civic duty and the duration of that service.” The commission is slated to submit these recommendations to Congress and the President in March 2020. This past January, while it continues to hold hearings in communities across the country, it released its first interim report.

The report found that Selective Service is “a mystery to most Americans,” who were not aware that all men ages 18 to 25 have a legal obligation to register in case of a draft. Although the draft was abolished in 1973, the Selective Service registration requirement was resumed in 1980, when after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, a capability to conscript was again deemed critical to the national defense. The system for registering for Selective Service is passive: it occurs when you apply for your driver’s license or federal student aid. Most American males aren’t even aware that they’re registered for the draft. Furthermore, the commission’s interim report deals explicitly with the numbers we’d be talking about if a draft ever again occurred. Under the military’s current standards, 71% of Americans ages 17 to 24 do not meet the physical or mental qualifications for military service. People often assume the draft was compulsory for an entire generation, but this was never the case. Of those killed in Vietnam, the war most inextricably linked to the draft, 69.3% were volunteers.

**TO WAGE WAR**, America has always had to create a social construct to sustain it, from the colonial militias and French aid in the Revolution, to the introduction of the draft and the first-

## The burden of nearly two decades of war has been largely sustained by 1% of our population

➤  
**CIERRA SMITH, 18**  
**PORTLAND, ORE.**

*“In my school we didn’t talk about war much. Portland is a place where we don’t talk about the military. Growing up, it never felt to me like a war was going on. The first time I remember learning about 9/11 was around seventh grade. 9/11 all feels like history to me.”*







ever income tax to fund the Civil War, to the war bonds and industrial mobilization of World War II. In the past, a blend of taxation and conscription meant it was difficult for us to sustain a war beyond several years. Neither citizens nor citizen soldiers had much patience for commanders, or Commanders in Chief, who muddled along. Take, for example, Washington reading Thomas Paine's *The American Crisis* as a plea to his disbanding army before it famously crossed the Delaware ("These are the times that try men's souls...") or Lincoln, whose perceived mismanagement of the Civil War made his defeat in the 1864 presidential election a foregone conclusion (until Atlanta fell to the Union two months before the vote). The history of American warfare—even the "good" wars—is a history of our leaders desperately trying to preserve the requisite national will because Americans would not abide a costly, protracted war. This is no longer true.

Today the way we wage war is ahistorical—and seemingly without end. Never before has America engaged in a protracted conflict with an all-volunteer military that was funded primarily through deficit spending. Of our current \$22 trillion national debt, approximately \$6 trillion is a bill for the post-9/11 wars. These have become America's longest, surpassing Vietnam by 12 years. And it's been by design. In the aftermath of 9/11, there was virtually no serious public debate about a war tax or a draft. Our leaders responded to those attacks by mobilizing our government and military, but when it came to citizens, President George W. Bush said, "I have urged our fellow Americans to go about their lives." And so, the war effort moved to the shopping mall.

In fairness to Bush, when read as a response to a terrorist attack designed to disrupt American life, his remarks are understandable. However, when read in the context of what would become a two-decade military quagmire, those same remarks seem negligent, even calculated. This is particularly true for a generation of leaders (both Republican and Democrat) who came of age in Vietnam, when indignation at the draft mobilized the boomer generation to end the war, one that otherwise might have festered on like the wars today.

If after 9/11 we had implemented a draft and a war tax, it seems doubtful that the millennial generation would've abided 18 successive years of their draft numbers being called, or that their boomer parents would've abided a higher tax rate to, say, ensure that the Afghan National Army could rely on U.S. troops for one last fighting season in the Hindu Kush. Instead, deficit spending along with an all-volunteer military has given three successive administrations a blank check with which to wage war.









**ITZEL ANDRADE, 18**  
**DONNA, TEXAS**

*“My mom came here from Mexico on her own. I didn’t have a male role model. My mom showed me you don’t need someone to rely on to be successful. I want to show her that I can be a strong, independent woman and make her proud. I wanted to join the toughest branch of the service.”*



# Nation

**AND WAGE WAR** they have. Without congressional approval. Without updating the current Authorization for Use of Military Force, which was passed by Congress one week after 9/11. Currently we live in a highly militarized society but one which most of us largely perceive to be “at peace.” This is one of the great counterintuitive realities of the draft. A draft doesn’t increase our militarization. It decreases it.

A draft places militarism on a leash.

In the run-up to the 2018 midterm elections, 42% of Americans didn’t know whether we were still at war in Afghanistan. There are few debates in public life that should merit greater attention from its citizens than whether or not to commit their sons and daughters to fight and possibly to die. Imagine the debate surrounding troop levels in Afghanistan, or Iraq, or Syria, if some of those troops were draftees, or if your own child were eligible for the draft. Imagine if we lived in a society where the commitment of 18- and 19-year-olds to a combat zone generated the same breathless attention as a college-admissions scandal. Imagine Twitter with a draft going on; snowplow parents along with millennial cancel culture could save us by canceling the next unnecessary war.

By the end of Vietnam, after President Nixon eliminated the draft, the U.S. military was in shambles. It had morale problems. Drug problems. Racial problems. It had lost America’s first war, and with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and our failed bid to rescue our hostages from Tehran on the horizon, it seemed poised to lose the next one. From the detritus of the post-Vietnam military, a generation of officers—Colin Powell, Norman Schwarzkopf, Anthony Zinni, to name a few—began the decades-long work of thoroughly rebuilding and professionalizing its ranks. The most visible result of their toil played out in 1991, with scenes of ultra-sleek U.S. battle tanks trouncing the Iraqi military (the world’s fifth largest at the time) in a whopping hundred-hour-long ground war. More recently, we’ve seen the high-tech efficiency and lethality of our military in its rapid ouster of the Taliban from Afghanistan and in the rush to Baghdad in 2003.

Today, among many officers, particularly those senior officers who shepherded in that change, the idea of returning draftees to the military seems entirely regressive. Why would you degrade the finest fighting machine the world has ever known? It’s not a logic without merit, but professionalization has had its own drawbacks, ones that are perhaps more insidious to the fabric of a democracy than a draft would be.

Not long ago, I was speaking on a panel about the integration of women into frontline combat units. The Department of Defense had recently







## The military is also one of our great engines of societal mobility

approved its new policy, and I argued that it was the military's job—particularly that of my own service branch, the Marine Corps, which began implementation at a stubborn pace—to execute and support that policy, regardless of reservations. A retired Marine colonel in the audience became incensed. He stood, prodding: on average, women weren't as strong as men. Could I deny this? No. Men and women were often sexually attracted to one another. Could I deny this? Also no. Then how could I argue for integration when it would so clearly

degrade our ability to fight and win wars? I replied that our military didn't exist solely to fight and win our wars. Our military was also a representation of us. The colonel then turned to the crowd and, as if to prove his point, announced that if we took all the women in the room and pitted them against all the men in a "fight to the death," everyone knew who would win.

The idea that the military exists solely to fight and win our nation's wars is as juvenile as the colonel challenging the audience to throw down. Might makes right is not the policy of the U.S. government, or at least shouldn't be. If our military doesn't represent our values, it can threaten to undermine them. The Founding Fathers understood this. Their revolution relied on citizen soldiers, and they were suspicious of standing armies. It's a suspicion we've since shrugged off.

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**THE CONCERN** about degrading our military's capabilities through a draft is legitimate. Conscription has only ever been used in this country to augment a core force of volunteers, and often to great effect. Our World War II military was 61.2% conscripted. In Vietnam, it was 25%. The question then becomes: Could you introduce a certain number of conscripts into the all-volunteer military at a lower rate without a meaningful degradation in its capability? And what would that rate be? Ten percent (130,000 people), 5% (65,000 people), 1% (13,000 people)—and would those numbers be meaningful?

What would be most meaningful might not actually be the number of individuals drafted, but the specter of the draft itself. The idea that citizenship has a cost, that you owe something to society. Which leads to the question of who owes what? One of the central criticisms of the Vietnam-era draft was that it drew disproportionately from those of low socioeconomic backgrounds, while the children of the wealthy and influential were

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**ALEJANDRO  
FARCIERTMEJIA, 17**  
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**BRONX, N.Y.**  
.....

*"I have a personal experience with 9/11. Because of 9/11, I was almost a miscarriage. Those events scared my mother, and her blood pressure shot up. Because of this, I wound up being born prematurely and ended up in an incubator. That shouldn't have to happen to anyone else."*



able to finagle exceptions. Under rules promoted by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, draft boards across the country were required to call up men with IQ scores below the military's minimum standards to offset the recruitment deficit caused by college student deferments. Take for instance Harvard College, in which 19 alumni were killed in Vietnam, compared with Thomas Alva Edison High School, in lower-income northern Philadelphia. Despite being approximately one-quarter the size of Harvard, Edison high school suffered 64 alumni killed in action. Of the Harvard alumni killed, only one was a draftee.

Who gets drafted has always been just as important as whether or not there is a draft. In conflicts like Vietnam and the Civil War, the draft exacerbated social inequalities by providing exemptions for the wealthy and influential. A certain type of draft could, however, become a tool to promote greater equality. It could create greater social cohesion. And, lastly, it could create greater accountability between our policies and our population. In the era of the 1%, of hyper-partisanship, of identity politics and divisiveness, a reverse-engineered draft could prove a powerful tool to counteract these corrosive forces.

**HERE'S WHAT** a reverse-engineered draft could look like:

The Department of Defense would annually set a certain number of draftees for induction into the armed forces for two-year enlistments, which is half the typical enlistment of a volunteer. This number would be kept small as a percentage of the overall active-duty force, let's say 5%, or 65,000 people, which is roughly the size of the Coast Guard. By keeping the number small, we would retain the culture of professionalism born after the troubles of the post-Vietnam military. Upon induction, new service members are typically assigned military occupational specialties, like medic, truck driver or radio operator. However, in the past, another way people gamed the draft was to gain cushy assignments through influence within the military. In a reverse-engineered draft, inductees would only be eligible for military occupational specialties within the combat arms—infantry, tanks, artillery and the like. And with the recent integration of women, the gender divide would no longer be an issue as women would also be eligible not only for the draft but also for front-line service.

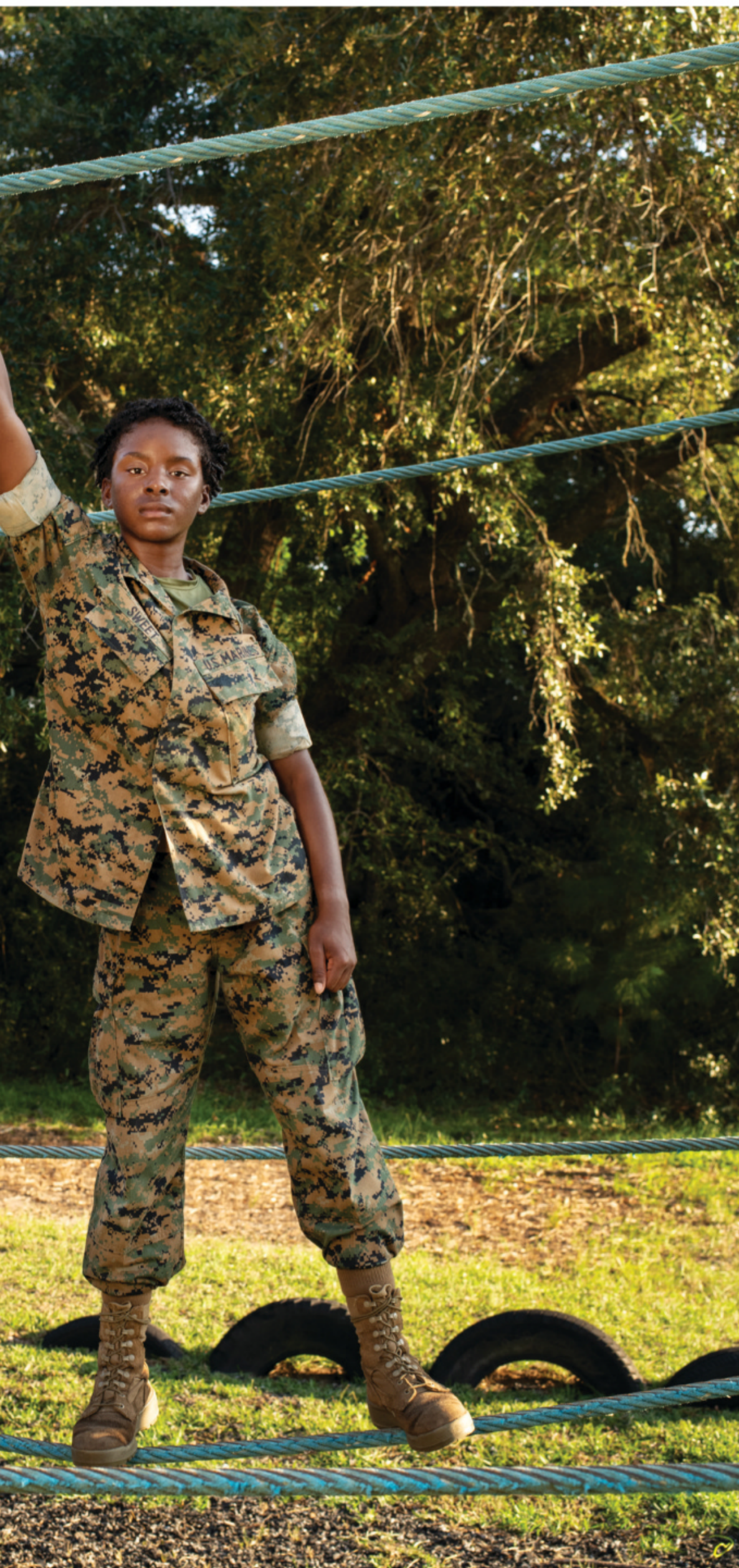
## Those whose families fall into the top income tax bracket would be the only ones eligible

➤ **DENYA SWEET, 18**  
**CHARLOTTE, N.C.**

*"9/11 really changed a lot of people's lives. We moved out of New York City two years after 9/11. My mom didn't tell me the reason why we left. But my mom had a friend who died in the attack, and I've always wondered if that's why."*







And no one could skip this draft, unlike previous drafts, where through the practice of hiring substitutes during the Civil War, or the hiring of certain podiatrists during the Vietnam War, the well-off adeptly avoided conscription. This placed the burden of national defense on those with the least resources. And when those wars turned to quagmires, elites in this country—whose children did not often fill the ranks—were less invested in the outcome.

Which comes to a final, essential aspect of the reverse-engineered draft: those whose families fall into the top income tax bracket would be the only ones eligible. These are the children of the most influential in our country, those whose financial success in business, or tech, or entertainment have placed them in a position to bundle political contributions among their friends, or have a call returned by a Senator or member of the House. If the college-admissions scandal surrounding William Singer's company the Key is any indication, it shows that this is a demographic that does not sit idly by with regard to their children's well-being.

The military does—as the agitated colonel pointed out—exist to fight and win our nation's wars. But it is also one of our great engines of societal mobility. Those who enlist are taught a trade, and if they earn an honorable discharge they're granted tuition for college under the GI Bill. From the greatest generation to my own millennial generation, the social result has been transformative. And the military will continue to attract the professionals who wish to serve out a 40-year career, as well as the ambitious citizens who wish to pull themselves up by their bootstraps with a four-year enlistment and the GI Bill. Our military continues to be an engine of societal mobility, but it also needs to return to being what it once was, a societal leveler, in which men and women of diverse backgrounds, at an impressionable age, were forced together in the pursuit of a mission larger than themselves.

Why send our sons and daughters to fight and die in the name of unity? Couldn't they sign up for Habitat for Humanity? Yes, they could, and opportunities to serve outside the military would still be important. However, an argument for mandatory national public service that excludes military service forgets perhaps the most important consequence of a draft, which is that with a draft the barrier to entering new wars would be significantly higher.

We were more than 10 years into the wars before I ever heard anyone talk about the draft. It was the summer of 2012, a weekday afternoon in August, and I was in a motorcade escorting the body of Gunnery Sergeant Jonathan









## Who gets drafted has always been just as important as whether or not there is a draft



**KYLIE MURPHY, 18  
NORTON, MASS.**

*"My grandfather was in the Marine infantry. But I'm not sure exactly what he did. Until now, I never thought to ask ... Growing up, I never knew we were at war. I feel more mature being a Marine. I feel like my own person now."*

W. Gifford, who had been killed in Afghanistan a couple of weeks before, to Arlington National Cemetery. His coffin was loaded on a caisson, a riderless horse trailing behind, just like that day with my daughter. I was sitting shotgun while my friend T— drove.

I'd known Gifford awhile, the two of us having served in the same special-operations unit, but Gifford and T— had been closer friends. As T— stared across the Potomac, to the lunchtime hustle of downtown Washington, he was angry, "Not a single person out there cares that Giff's dead. They don't even know."

"Is what it is," I said, affecting the doomy pragmatism fashionable among professional soldiers of that time.

T—, however, was less sanguine. "F-ck it, man. I'm for a draft," he said while gazing past the river, as if with those words alone he might condemn all those oblivious civilians to a year-long tour in Helmand province.

T— was the consummate professional. He'd deployed as a special operator in Afghanistan, Iraq and several other war zones. If anyone believed in the sanctity of the all-volunteer military, it should have been him. So he couldn't be serious. Could he imagine how we'd perform with our ranks filled with draftees. "We'd suck at fighting," I said.

And he answered, "I'm not sure we need to be as good at this as we are."

At the time it surprised me to hear the most seasoned military professional I knew call for a draft. But it shouldn't have. That day we'd been fighting for more than a decade and were poised to fight on for at least another. The professionals across the river rushing to lunches while we buried Giff infuriated T—. Their indifference fueled these wars. As a soldier with three kids, too close to retirement to start a new career, he could say their indifference was, literally, killing his friends. And, with each successive deployment, also threatening to kill him. But could we blame civilians for their apathy? No one asked them to care about the wars. How to make them care? His answer was the draft. It's become mine too.

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*Ackerman is the author of three novels and the memoir Places and Names: On War, Revolution, and Returning. He fought in Iraq and Afghanistan as a Marine*



*Caroline Taylor at her grandmother's house in North Ogden, Utah, in September. Her father Brent Taylor was killed in Afghanistan last year during his fourth deployment*







# ‘I Don’t Have Seven Arms To Hug Them All’

ONE YEAR AFTER A FATHER’S  
DEATH IN AFGHANISTAN,  
A MOTHER AND HER CHILDREN  
STRUGGLE TO MOVE ON

BY W.J. HENNIGAN/NORTH OGDEN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
PETER VAN AGTMAEL FOR TIME





## Jennie Taylor walks through the moonlit cemetery, past gray tombstones, faded bouquets and left-behind remembrances

until she comes to her husband's grave. Nearly a year has passed since Brent was killed in Afghanistan on his fourth combat deployment. She kneels in the damp grass and begins to cry. Tomorrow will be their 16th wedding anniversary, her first without him.

A single gunshot took the father of her seven children, the mayor of her hometown and a decorated major in the Utah Army National Guard. At times, she believes she's overcome the worst of the pain. But then there are other times, like tonight, when her heart feels as if it has been wrenched from her chest.

The evening breeze blows strands of Jennie's red hair onto her wet cheeks. She's brought with her a collection of photographs: joyful moments from their wedding day; military promotion ceremonies; events with their smiling blond kids. She reminds herself those happy days weren't that long ago. But she's caught in a grim reality. "I've been waiting for things to return to normal, but in my heart I know that's not going to happen," Jennie says. "I can move on and have a beautiful future for the next 10 to 20 years, but this is still going to be part of my life. Brent is gone."

In an instant, Jennie and her family joined tens of thousands of others who have lost a loved one in combat, an unseen society that no one wants to join or ever fully identify with.



▲  
*Megan Taylor and her brother Lincoln, on their living room sofa after returning home from school*

Who envisions themselves a widow at 39 years old? How can you accept that you'll never again see the man you built your life with? And how do you tell seven children their dad is dead?

Facing those questions over the past 11 months has changed Jennie. Her adult life had been defined by Brent's involvement in America's forever wars, but she herself had been removed from it. Brent enlisted in the Utah National Guard in June 2003, three days after he proposed to her. In the years that followed, he was sent to bases around the country for training missions ahead of his tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He regularly missed holidays, anniversaries, birthdays and key milestones like their children's first words and first steps. Jennie, a former schoolteacher, was responsible for their home life. While Brent was on the other side of the globe, her world in North Ogden was





small. “I was always a side player in this wonderful man’s life and gave him constant support, but now it’s entirely up to me,” she says. “When he died, every future goal of mine died. I’m sure every feminist would hate me for saying that, but it’s true. Now I’m trying to find who I am and how I move on a path forward for my family.”

While the rest of America has remained distant from the 18-year-old war that stole her husband, she has been drawn closer to it. It is now a central part of her life. Since Brent’s death, Jennie has sought out the soldiers with whom Brent fought and other families who have lost someone to war. She works on causes that show how the brunt of today’s conflict is

## How do you tell seven children their dad is dead?

borne by a few American military families and small communities. There are 14,000 American troops in Afghanistan now, down from about 100,000 in 2011. An average of two American troops die there each month. But if you aren’t in the military or don’t have a family member in the military, today’s conflicts have little impact on your life.

She’s launched efforts inside North Ogden to ensure that Brent’s legacy as mayor stays alive by throwing her political support behind a successor who’s committed to continuing Brent’s pro-business initiatives, which often rankled community elders. She’s also dedicated to seeing that some good ultimately comes from the bloody, and seemingly endless, American wars abroad. She has launched a foundation in Brent’s name that helps widows and military families; she’s raising \$60,000 for a gold-star family memorial in North Ogden and another in Salt Lake City; she’s spearheaded a blood drive, aims to sponsor a 5K race next year and perhaps coordinate a golf tournament; she attends and speaks at events around the country. “I don’t have any education that qualifies me to lead these causes,” she says. “But I feel a responsibility to celebrate those who not only die for our country but are willing to sacrifice on behalf of this country.”

She has learned things along the way. Her experience with the military system that serves surviving families, for example, has been mixed. Getting widows’ benefits has been a challenge, and the government can be brusque. The Army still hasn’t told Jennie exactly what happened to Brent. All she knows is that an Afghan soldier, someone Brent was trying to help, shot him in the back of head during a routine march on base near Kabul, the Afghan capital. She doesn’t know who the killer is, how he pulled off the attack, what drove him to do it or whether anything has been done to prevent its happening again. She’s been told an investigation is in its final stages, but her questions keep piling up.

Then there are the more immediate needs of her seven children, who range from 1 year to 14 years old. When they wake up at 6 a.m., Jennie’s “reality show” begins. Seven breakfasts to be made. Seven sets of teeth that need brushing. They’ll need a ride to school. They’ll need to be picked up. They’ll need a cooler full of sports drinks for flag football and cheer practice. They’ll need a ride there too. Laundry. Dinner. Baths. The routine repeats. There are no days off.

Many people in North Ogden, a mountain-ringed middle-class suburb of nearly 20,000 north of Salt Lake City, have helped. Brent was



# Nation

elected to the city council here in 2009, and became mayor in 2013. He won re-election in 2017. Neighbors in the largely Mormon community bring the family dinner every Tuesday and help with the children when they can.

The only time Jennie has to herself is at night. That's when she slips out of the house to be alone with Brent. It is nearly midnight when Jennie turns to leave the cemetery, the moon hanging between two peaks in the nearby Wasatch Range. Her alarm clock will go off in six hours, but one of the kids will nudge her awake first.

**JENNIE WASN'T HOME** on the cloudy November morning when two uniformed soldiers walked up her driveway toward their brown brick home. It was a Saturday and she was visiting college friends from Brigham Young University in Provo. Her mother Kristin was watching the children, so when the soldiers appeared in the doorway, she called Jennie's cell phone. But the soldiers couldn't tell her anything. Protocol demanded they speak to Jennie in person. She would have to travel 30 miles north to Utah National Guard headquarters in Draper to find out the news.

Jennie tried to handle the situation. Maybe he was injured. Maybe he was paralyzed. Maybe he was handicapped. She couldn't breathe, let alone drive. Her former roommate offered to take her, and as the landscape rushed by at 70 m.p.h., Jennie tried to focus her thoughts by scribbling them down in orange pen: "If he is dead, I have to process this." She wrote directly under it: "I don't have a choice. I can't fall apart. My kids matter most."

When she got to the long single-story headquarters building, two soldiers were holding the glass doors open for her. As she stepped inside and her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she saw another soldier standing stiffly at the next door. When she walked further inside, she realized that each door in the narrow hallway—perhaps a dozen or more—had a soldier posted in front of it. "And none of them would look at me," Jennie recalls, tears welling up in her blue eyes. "That's when I knew for sure he was dead."

She sat inside a cramped cream-colored conference room. The two officers told her

**Jennie hurried home to tell her children before the news reached them**







*Jennie measures a potential  
gravestone for her husband Brent  
on Sept. 17, the day before her first  
wedding anniversary without him*







the details were murky, but it was known that Brent and another U.S. soldier were shot on Nov. 3, 2018, by one of the Afghan troops they were training during a routine hike near Camp Scorpion in Kabul, where Brent was based. Other Afghan troops in the unit had quickly drawn their guns and shot the killer dead. It was the fifth “insider attack” in four months, and the motives behind it remain unknown. Brent was evacuated to nearby Bagram Airfield and died during the short helicopter ride. The six-page military autopsy report, observed by TIME, contains grim details. The attacker shot Brent in the back of the head above his right ear; the bullet tore through his brain before exiting the left side of his forehead. The motive remains unknown.

Later that day, the military issued a typically bland statement that an unidentified service member had been killed in Afghanistan, with the usual disclaimer that additional information would become public 24 hours after family notification. However, it didn’t take long for news of Brent’s death to spread through North Ogden. Jennie hurried home to tell her children before the news reached them. It would be the most difficult thing she would ever do.

The kids had gone out for McDonald’s with Jennie’s stepfather and brother, and they happened to pull up to the house at the same time

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*Jennie tries to get the kids to bed at the family’s ranch home, which Brent dreamed of turning into a farm*

Jennie did. They followed her into the house and down the carpeted stairway into the ground-floor living room: Megan, 13; Lincoln, 11; Alex, 9; Jacob, 7; Ellie, 5; Jonathan, 2; and Caroline, 11 months. Sitting around a leather sectional couch, they learned their father was dead. Seven sets of eyes looked back at Jennie in disbelief. As the news sank in, Jennie tried to embrace each of them to acknowledge each child’s grief. “It was hard because I’m not an octopus,” she says. “I don’t have seven arms to hug them all.”

Three days after Brent was killed, his remains arrived on a hulking C-17 jet at Dover Air Force Base in the predawn mist at 4 a.m. Jennie and two of her kids looked on as six soldiers with white gloves carried the flag-draped transfer case off the back of the plane. Jennie later put on a brave face and stood before cameras to give a short statement. “To call it a sobering event would be an unspeakable understatement,” she said, looking on blankly in a

navy blue pea coat. “To say that our hearts are anything but shattered would be nothing short of true deceit. And yet, to deny the sacred honor that it is to stand that close to some of the freshest

**One of the most difficult parts was how to deal with the things he left behind**





blood that has been spilt for our country would be absolute blasphemy.”

She spoke with Army Major Travis Reinold, who had traveled with Brent’s remains alone in the C-17’s cavernous cargo hold from Afghanistan. He did not witness Brent’s death, but had served the past three months with him. The two of them were part of a 10-officer team attached to the Army’s elite 75th Ranger Regiment. Their job was to train Afghan commandos so they could work with American special operators on raid missions. It was supposed to be a safe assignment.

Reinold told Jennie how much the other officers respected Brent. He told her how everyone on base knew him because his salt-and-pepper hair contrasted with that of the younger soldiers and Afghans. He told her that Afghans respected Brent because he spent time with them in their camps. Jennie knew this was true. Major Abdul Rahman Rahmani, an Afghan Army helicopter pilot, posted a letter on Twitter addressed to Jennie that outlined his admiration for Brent, whom he called a “compassionate man whose life was not just meaningful, it was inspirational.”

Over the next six days, the mortuary team at Dover prepared Brent for burial. They washed his hair, cleaned his wounds and dressed him in his blue Class A uniform. They pinned a golden

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*At the end of a  
busy workweek,  
Jennie waits for the  
children to finish  
brushing their teeth*

oak leaf to each of his shoulders, indicating his rank as major, and more than a dozen medals and ribbons to the left side of his chest, including a Bronze Star; a Purple Heart; and a Combat Action Badge, a two-inch silver pin featuring a bayonet wrapped in an oak wreath. The meticulous process is carried out whether or not anyone decides to view the body. Jennie’s family did not.

Brent’s remains landed at Roland R. Wright Air National Guard Base in Salt Lake City on Nov. 14. Six troops transferred the flag-draped casket to a white hearse, and more than two dozen law-enforcement officers on motorcycles fell into formation behind it as it drove the 46 miles north to North Ogden on Interstate 15. Drivers yielded out of respect and people lined the roads and looked on from overpasses. Jennie, trailing the hearse in a white van with the rest of the family, felt like she was watching the funeral procession from outside her body. “It was like a movie,” she says. “People were everywhere: kids, flags, adults. Everywhere.”

In North Ogden, hundreds of residents stood in the cold for more than an hour along both sides of Washington Boulevard to see the mayor’s return. When the hearse rolled past, there was silence, except for the rumble of motors from police vehicles and the flapping of American flags.



**THERE ARE ROSEBUSHES** in the Taylors' front yard, a picturesque swirl of pink, white and magenta. But when they first began to bud this past springtime, Jennie despised them. "I felt like nature was mocking me," she says. Brent had planted them there.

One of the most difficult parts of Brent's death was how to deal with the things he left behind. It wasn't just the shoes, shirts, pants, suits, hats, underwear, uniforms and coats in closets and drawers. It was that he had left them on hooks on the bedroom door and by the front door. He was coming back in January—except he didn't.

Jennie couldn't muster the strength to go through each of these items by hand. His clothes smelled like him. His shoes still had dirt in the treads from their garden. The other thing was that people from around the country who had seen her story on nightly newscasts were sending her things: a throw pillow with Brent's face embroidered in the middle, a teddy bear in Army fatigues, a velvet blanket with an American flag that featured each family member's name on the stripes.

One day, Jennie decided it all had to go. So one Tuesday morning, while she was at a political event, a group of women from the neighborhood came and spent several hours placing everything in more than a dozen black storage containers and carrying them into a shed in the backyard. "She needed to reclaim her life without swimming in mementos every day," says Kristy Pack, Jennie's younger sister, who lives about a mile away.

But eliminating all of the reminders is impossible. Every day, Jennie drives the kids to school down Washington Boulevard, the street where Brent's body returned home, past the Maverik gas station, one of the businesses Brent had helped lure to North Ogden, and past a pennant with Brent's smiling face that hangs on a streetlight Brent helped install as part of his town "beautification program."

The family's ranch house was entirely Brent's idea. It's built on an acre and a half of land that stretches like a big green blanket outside the back door. "He had a crazy idea that we could turn it into a farm," Jennie says, smiling. "He didn't grow up on a farm or anything, but he thought it would be a good idea for the kids to learn the virtues of manual labor."

They planted peaches, plums, pears, apples, apricots, hot peppers, sweet peppers, green



## 'We're not the only family to suffer tragedy in this country or in Afghanistan.'

beans, squash, tomatoes and even raised 19 chickens in a coop. It was all irrigated through an elaborate system of 150 ft. of water hoses and diverters that Brent engineered. But in his absence, the farm has faded. The fruit lays in heaps under 41 hunched-over trees. The pink and black water hoses sit coiled in a pile. The chicken coops are empty. Weeds compete with the fruit and berry plants. Jennie is unsure about what to do with the land. "It's really sad," she says, picking a plump yellow peach from a sagging branch. "But it's hard to find the time or energy to take care of everything."

She helps the children deal with the grief as best she can. She looks for signs of pain. Her own father committed suicide when she was 10 years old, so she knows what it's like to live with loss. Money is a constant concern. Jen-





nie stopped teaching high school 15 years ago, so she and the kids depended on Brent's modest government salary to get by. She received a lump sum of \$400,000 from life insurance and gets monthly payments in veterans' and survivors' benefits. "It's enough for now," she says.

Charity has made a big difference. Someone started a GoFundMe account that raised \$500,000 for her family. The nonprofit Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation paid off the remaining \$250,000 balance on her mortgage. An anonymous donor contacted a local car dealer and gave the family a new metallic gold Chevrolet Suburban. A man from Florida cut the family a check for \$10,000. And last Christmas, the children received truckloads of toys from people across the country. Jennie is grateful. She wrote 300

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*Ellie Taylor plays with cousin Vivian Pack in her bedroom. Resting on the dressers are two framed flags presented to each member of the family by the U.S. military*

Christmas cards responding to every letter that had a return address. And the money has made it possible to buy school supplies, clothes and groceries. "I thank God every day for what's been given to us," she says. "We're not the only family to suffer tragedy in this country or in Afghanistan, for that matter, where innocent people die every day."

She is looking for ways to repay the debt. On a recent Tuesday, she dropped the children at school, then attended a business meeting about her foundation and Follow the Flag, another nonprofit that raises awareness of veterans' issues. After that, she visited a local monument-maker to begin planning for North Ogden's gold-star memorial and to look at options for Brent's headstone, which she will share with him one day. In between, she took a phone call with Lynn Satterthwaite, a former North Ogden city-council member who is running for North Ogden mayor. The local politician Brent had asked to serve as acting mayor while he deployed, Brent Chugg, isn't running.

Jennie is concerned about whether Brent's legacy is represented on the ballot. The initiatives he spearheaded—like business expansion, the town beautification program and construction plans around the local amphitheater—will likely be abandoned if an ally doesn't see them through. She believes Satterthwaite will champion those efforts. "This is an older community that struggles with change," she says.

The day before her anniversary, Jennie gets home after her errands, just before the kids return from school. Within minutes, the living room is a mess of discarded clothes and mandarin-orange peels, the kitchen table covered with homework and books. An hour later, Jennie is out the door on a grocery run to purchase more oranges, Cheez-Its and fruit snacks for Megan's cheer practice; Gatorades and brownies for Alex's flag-football game; and a costume for Ellie, who has "Pirate Day" the next day at school.

After the football game, she wrangles the kids for the nightly prayer before bed. They change into their pajamas, brush their teeth and retreat to their beds. Then the youngest children decide they also want a lullaby. Jennie steps into their darkened room and sings a Mormon hymn. Her voice carries down the hallway through the open bedroom door:

*For the temple is a holy place  
Where we are sealed together.  
As a child of God, I've learned this truth:  
A family is forever.*

□





# MODERN TIMES

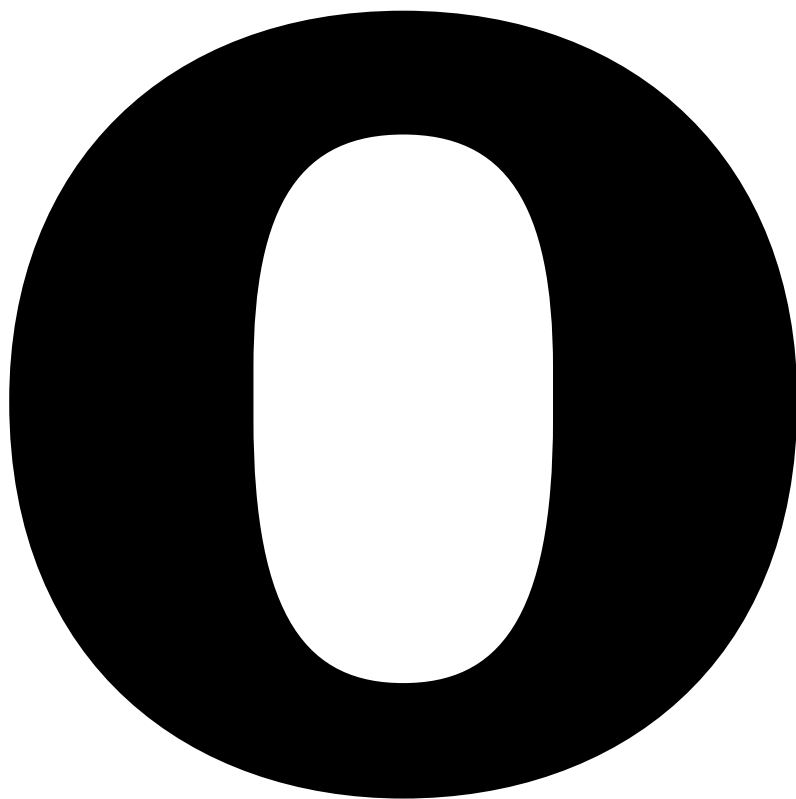
By embracing the future, a young publisher is helping save more than the family business **By Karl Vick**





*New York Times  
publisher A.G.  
Sulzberger in  
the newsroom*





ON A SUNDAY MORNING IN THE SUMMER OF 2018, ARTHUR Gregg Sulzberger, a member of the fifth generation of the family that controls the *New York Times*, was changing the diaper of a member of the sixth, when the phone rang. Another mess: A few days earlier President Trump had invited Sulzberger, in his capacity as *Times* publisher, to a private meeting at the White House. Now a Trump tweet had not only made the meeting public but also asserted it had produced an unlikely meeting of minds: “Spent much time talking about the vast amounts of Fake News being put out by the media & how that Fake News has morphed into phrase, ‘Enemy of the People.’ Sad!”

What happened next amounts to the news as we’ve known it for decades. The *Times* put out a version of events contradicting the President’s. The White House doubled down. And the public took sides. But six months later, after accepting another White House invitation (this time on the record), Sulzberger sat down at a microphone and talked to someone else: the people who download *The Daily*, which is among the most popular podcasts in America and is produced by the *New York Times*. Listening is as different from reading as the *Times* of 10 years ago is from the news organization today, and it’s all there in “The President and the Publisher,” the Feb. 1 episode devoted to the meeting. From Sulzberger, you hear not only about the diaper, but also about waiting in the cold on Pennsylvania Avenue because the Secret Service didn’t know the publisher was coming. From Trump,

**Stock in ‘the failing New York Times’ runs three times its price a decade ago**

there’s an evident boredom with questions of policy, then a plea delivered in honeyed tones: “But I came from Jamaica, Queens, Jamaica Estates, and I became President of the United States. I’m sort of entitled to a great story from my—just one—from my newspaper. I mean, you know?”

TRUMP TRIUMPHS is a pretty great story. It covered two-thirds of the *Times* front page the morning after an election result that three years later still draws attention from other vital matters, including the signal accomplishment of the slender, bald young man seated on the other side of the Resolute desk. The American landscape is littered with the husks of news outlets

desiccated by the migration of life-giving attention from a page that folds to a page that glows. Worse, people tell pollsters they don’t even believe most of what they read on their news feeds. Yet in this forbidding new world the country’s stuffiest, most remote and self-important newspaper somehow became a relatable, nimble and savvy digital vehicle for what

on many days is the best journalism in the world.

Trump calls it “the failing *New York Times*,” but its stock sells for three times what it did a decade ago. Its 4.7 million paying subscribers is more than three times its print peak and growing so steadily that the company’s stated goal of 10 million by 2025 does not seem out of reach. The *Times* today produces not only a profit but also a certain hope. Some “legacy” news outlets—the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, indeed, the very magazine you’re reading—were buoyed by







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Sulzberger, right, in the second White House meeting, on Jan. 31

up the machinery of democracy by reducing citizens to followers and news to content.

“I actually hate the word *content*,” Sulzberger says. “It’s a word for *junk* ... the junk you shovel into Facebook.

“What we do is journalism.”

**INFORMAL AND INTENSE**, Sulzberger embodies every sort of generational change at the *Times*. He turned 39 on Aug. 5, and was not yet 35 when in 2013 he found himself tasked with addressing the organization’s digital future, as leader of the call to arms formally known as the Innovation Report. The situation was dire. Revenues were skidding, as was print circulation. The home page was hemorrhaging viewers. Digital ads were down, and no one was sure what to do next.

“The newsroom was not always brimming with optimism,” says Bill Keller, who presided over three rounds of staff cuts as top editor before retiring in 2011. “It was a gloomy time.”

Yet in other ways the *Times* was going great guns. Even as it trimmed its staff, it was snapping up top talent that competing newspapers were shedding. Rival reporters long put off by the *Times*’ smugness and internecine culture found there was

public-spirited billionaires. The *Times* not only found its own way, it slashed a shaft of light through the murk of social media—those immersive platforms that have gummed

## The family business

Publishers as stewards



Adolph Ochs  
1896–1935



Arthur Hays Sulzberger  
1935–1961



Arthur Ochs “Punch” Sulzberger  
1963–1992



Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr.  
1992–2017



Arthur Gregg Sulzberger  
2018–present

no other place as prominent that supported their work. During the Great Recession, which hastened the collapse of the newspaper industry, the *Times* did something extraordinary: it spent, investing in its core mission of newsgathering—its newsroom never fell below 1,100 people—with money no longer ready at hand.

To come up with cash, the company sold off great chunks of itself. It sold TV stations and radio stations. It sold the Boston *Globe*, its slice of the Boston Red Sox and a chain of smaller newspapers. It sold part of its new headquarters, a 52-story showpiece designed by Renzo Piano, a famous Italian architect. In 2009, the darkest hour, the company went hat in hand to a Mexican billionaire. Carlos Slim lent the *Times* \$250 million in exchange for deeply discounted stock options that eventually gave him a 17% stake in the company. But it would never be his.

All voting shares are held by the Ochs-Sulzberger Family Trust, established in 1997, controlled by a handful of descendants of Adolph Ochs’ only daughter and devoted to the proposition that some things are more important than money. SEC filings state the trust’s “primary objective” is that the *Times* continues “as an independent newspaper, entirely fearless, free of ulterior influence and unselfishly devoted to the public welfare.” It must have been in that spirit that the company in 2009 suspended its dividend, the quarterly payout to stockholders that could bring \$1 million a year to a member of the trust.

“I grew up in a family that had a lot of pride in this place and a lot of love for this place,” says Sulzberger, in his sixth-floor office in the *Times* building, which it is buying back this year. “And some of the bravest and most important moves made to protect this place were actually made by folks who never worked a day here, for whom the strength of this institution, particularly the strength of the newsroom, was the priority that we should always put first.”

And yet, the scion of the *Times* grew up determined to avoid the family business. His father Arthur Ochs Sulzberger had been publisher of the *Times* since A.G. was in middle school. His mother Gail Gregg had also worked as a journalist. But the son had an independent streak. He grew up on Manhattan’s Upper West Side and was in a bowling league. He worked on the paper at the private

Fieldston School, but prepared for a career in something else, maybe the environment. Matt Baldwin, who has known Sulzberger since West End Collegiate preschool, associates him with a love of outdoors, including the city: “Let’s go check out Staten Island today.” He was a picky eater.

“My form of contrarianism is I’m going to do something different, you know?” Sulzberger says. Becoming a journalist “just felt so predictable.” Unfortunately he showed talent in a feature-writing class at Brown and admired the penetrating critiques of



# Business

the teacher, Tracy Breton, a Pulitzer Prize winner who coaxed him into an internship at a Providence, R.I., paper. “And so I gave it a shot. And ended up loving it.” He moved on to the *Oregonian* in Portland, and in 2009 agreed to come home to the *Times*.

Even—maybe especially—for a Sulzberger, the newsroom was hugely intimidating. The *Times* has won 127 Pulitzer Prizes, nearly twice as many as any other outlet, and projected the staid confidence of the Establishment it embodies. While his last name certainly got him a job at the *Times* and may have helped him onto the front page, it was the quality of his reporting and writing that landed him there some 40 times (though he may be best remembered for a Food section cover about being a vegetarian: MEATLESS IN THE MIDWEST: A TALE OF SURVIVAL).

“Probably one of the quickest studies I’ve ever worked with,” says Adam Bryant, who was his editor when Sulzberger was the Kansas City bureau chief, where he landed after a year and a half in the newsroom. “He’s always learning and synthesizing and asking ‘What makes sense here?’ whether it’s a story, a leadership challenge or the strategy for the future of the New York *Times*.”

In 2013, Sulzberger was back in New York, learning editing on the metro desk and looking forward to the possibility of the ultimate adventure as a foreign correspondent, when Keller’s successor as top editor, Jill Abramson, asked him to steer the committee on what the *Times* should be doing online. “I wasn’t exactly the most digital person in the newsroom,” he says. He didn’t have a Facebook account, and had posted on Twitter maybe twice. But he was told he had no choice.

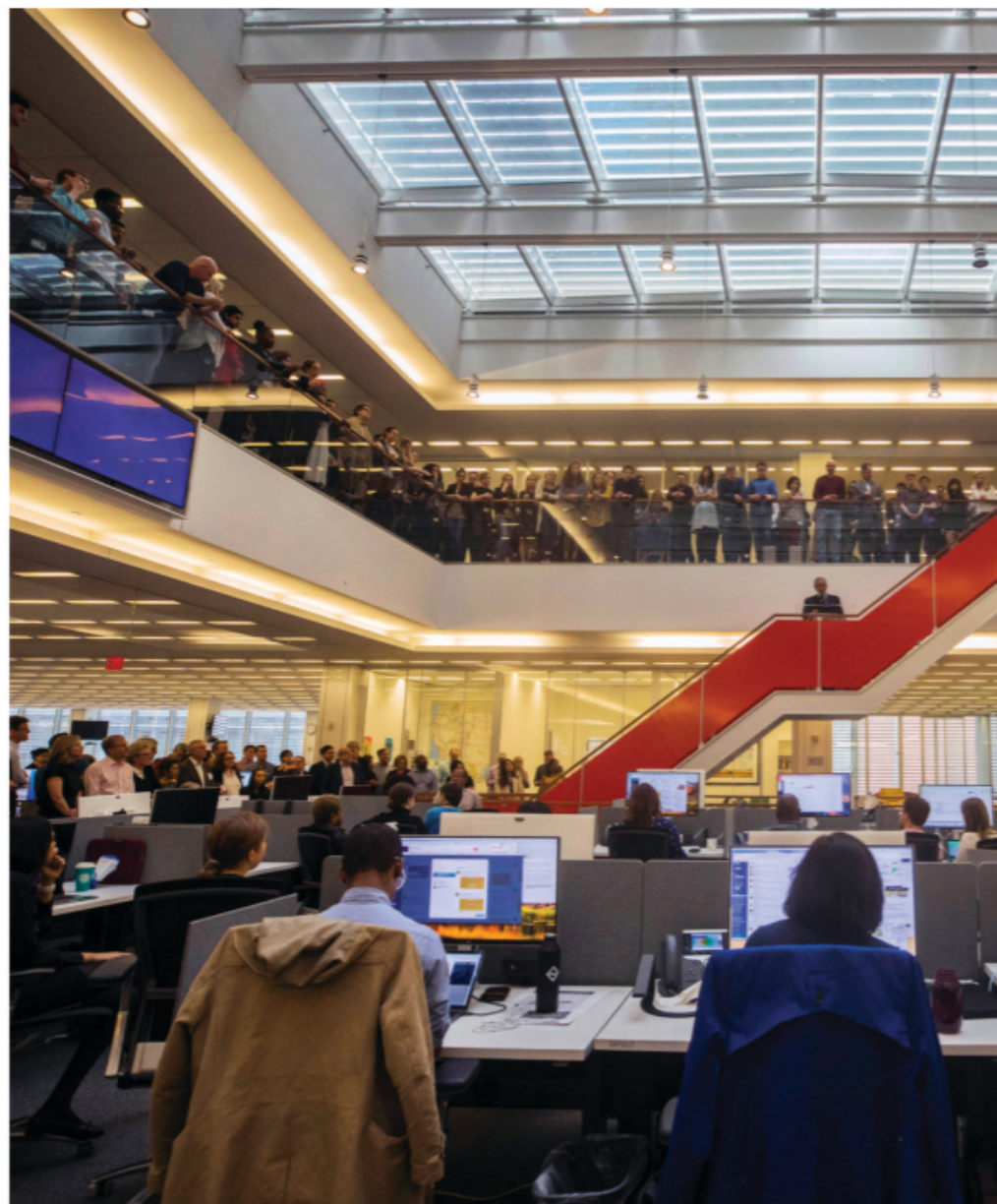
“The miscasting ended up being a really good thing,” he says, articulating what would become his management method, “because I went in absolutely certain that I did not know enough and that I had to learn. As a reporter you know this, right? You think you have the story, and the more you talk to people, even when you’re hearing consistent things, not everyone else is connecting the dots. And at some point you say, ‘Oh, here is the story.’ And to me the story was that the New York *Times* was holding the future at arm’s length.”

Not anymore. Five years later, the *Times* still publishes in print (and makes a nice profit on it) but seems to exist first and naturally in the digital realm. Stories appear in combinations of words, images, video, and graphics with a fluidity that feels both immediate and thoughtful. It can reconstruct a fatal avalanche, offer a tour of Guantánamo, get to the bottom of a chemical-weapons attack and take the reader with its architecture critic to a new office park he finds appalling.

And if it fails to grasp the idea of news alerts—the *Times* is much less likely to ping a phone with actual breaking news than with a tease for a story it wants to show off—there’s a lot to show off. The newsroom produces a major investigation or ambitious enterprise story almost daily—and in formats that serve both the reader and the *Times*. Consider the case of a rash of taxi-driver suicides in New York: It is one thing to read a long story explaining that the drivers were unable to pay their debts not because

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*The newsroom  
gathers in April  
for Pulitzer  
announcements*

**The *Times* now  
seems to exist first  
and naturally in  
the digital realm**

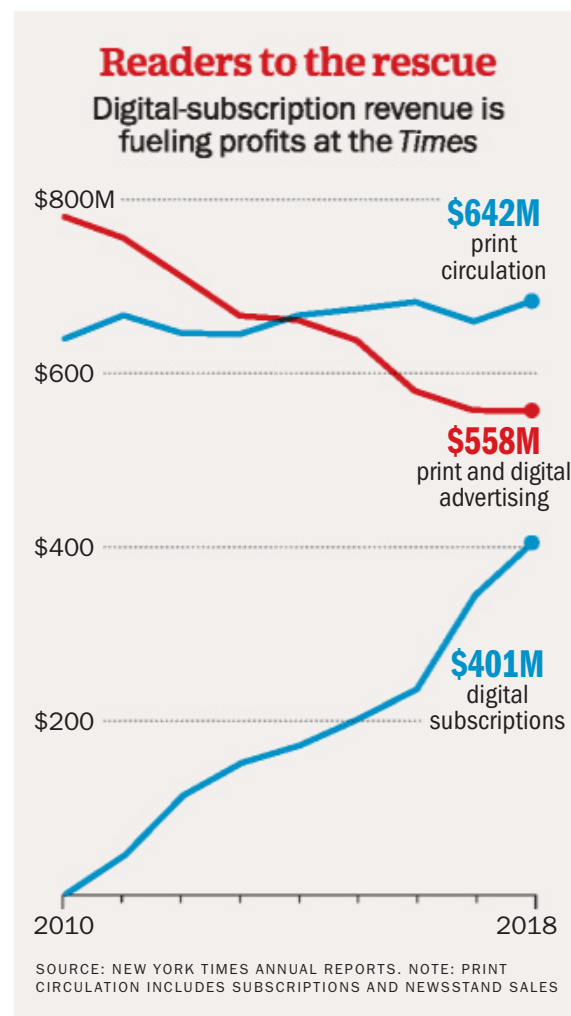


Uber was taking their fares, but because a mendacious city taxicab commission pumped the price of a medallion to levels that mathematically could not be paid back. But it’s something else to hear the reporter walk you through it all on *The Daily* and mention, in passing, “We talked to 450 people for this story.”

**LOOMING BEHIND ALL THIS NEWNESS** is the baggage that comes with “legacy” media. In the early 21st century the *Times* accumulated a string of controversies including employment of a fabulist reporter (Jayson Blair), the subsequent resignation of its top two editors and the interrogation of its pliant coverage of the George W. Bush Administration’s rationale for invading Iraq. Then on May 14, 2014, Sulzberger’s father fired Abramson, the first woman to serve as executive editor. One day later, a leaked copy of the Innovation Report appeared on BuzzFeed, baldly laying out the paper’s shortfalls in the digital realm, and the reasons.

But what could have been another scandal was read, both inside and outside the company, as a welcome dose of candor. The reaction became the first expression of a transformation nudging the *Times* toward the fail-forward culture of a startup. Lots of things were tried: The first smartphone app, NYT Now, turned out to be a flop, but was cannibalized wholesale to produce the one now on millions of phones—a long, rich scroll, constantly updated, that drives the newsroom metabolism as the front page used to. The cooking app launched in 2014, on the other hand, was an instant hit, and puzzles a no-brainer (“I take





the paper for the crossword”). After years of seeing digital innovators leave in frustration, the *Times* became a magnet for web developers, multimedia producers, and product specialists who might do their work and move on. Most of the journalists who worked on the Innovation Report are no longer there.

“People come through. You’re not going to spend your whole life here,” says Dean Baquet, who succeeded Abramson, and persuaded Sulzberger to leave reporting to become head of newsroom strategy. “It’s constant experiment. Constantly trying things. Print did not allow for experimentation. It could not. It was like a manufacturing plant.”

The newcomers are shaping this newly flexible *Times*, sometimes into contortions that, once public, can resemble spectacles. In August, after a black female opinion contributor called out a white male editor for racial insensitivity on Twitter, the editor was demoted. It was all written up in the *Times*, along with the newsroom town hall where Baquet, who is African American, fielded questions from employees alive to issues around gender, race and patriarchy that are challenging workplaces everywhere. At the newspaper of record, the question was why it did not label the President “racist.” “This is hard stuff,” Baquet said.

*The Daily* was created by an arrival from public radio and took off like a shot with host Michael Barbaro, rising from 5.8 million downloads in February 2017 to 48 million in June 2019. It was, on one hand, an example of restlessness rewarded: the *Times* was present with a new form when appetite for that form soared. But it also revealed a unique resource the *Times* had not realized it could exploit: its newsroom of 1,600 brimmed with experts. And on *The Daily*, they sound careful, relatable, professional—a lot like a news story written to go online. The Internet, which has

no time for throat clearing, required the *Times* to find a voice. “We can be our best version of ourselves, in a new medium, in a new way,” says Sam Dolnick, a Sulzberger cousin who oversees the podcast.

In June, the *Times* unveiled *The Weekly*, a half-hour documentary series backed by FX and Hulu, that seeks to join the ranks of *Frontline* and *60 Minutes*. The taxi story was the second episode. Experiments with augmented and virtual reality also continue, says Sulzberger, who as an executive tends to hold to his conclusions fiercely. (“He can sometimes be convinced his point of view is not the right point of view,” says CEO Mark Thompson.) The long-term goal, Sulzberger says, is to cultivate relationships and build trust “with a whole different section of readers, by meeting them where they are, in the form that they want to be met at.”

To pay for all this, however, the company looked not to the future but to the past: it asked people to subscribe. And from that, more than money flowed.

**THIS IS WHERE THE STORY** of the *Times* pierces the fog enveloping news and information the world over.

“We have to produce journalism worth paying for,” Sulzberger says, a lot. It’s something the print *Times* actually never stopped doing. To this day the largest share of the company’s revenue flows from its print edition—a splendid platform, valuable for ease of navigation, serendipity, graphics that can spread across two pages and the tactile pleasure of newsprint. A half-million readers have remained loyal as the annual price of a daily subscription can easily reach \$1,000. At newsstands, the Sunday paper now goes for \$6.

But on the Internet, people were conditioned to expect information to be free. When, in 2011, the *Times* began allowing only the first 20 (now 10) stories to land on your screen at no charge, then required payment, “it was a big bet,” says David Perpitch, a Sulzberger cousin with an M.B.A. from Harvard who joined the *Times* as it instituted the paywall. “I don’t think we realized how big the bet would be and how important it would be.”

But there was no choice. For a hundred years, newspapers had relied chiefly on the sale of ads to cover most of the bills. The Internet made that impossible, scattering eyeballs across zillions of sites. You simply cannot support a newsroom on the money brought in by digital ads attached to news stories—no matter how viral your content.

BuzzFeed, founded on virality, laid off 200 journalists in 2019, and its leader is urging consolidation among other online newsrooms, a trend that has accelerated across the industry in recent weeks.

Still, among legacy outlets, only the *Wall Street Journal* and *Financial Times* (whose readers might expense their subscriptions) had dared erect a paywall by the time the *Times* did.





Executives had no real idea how many people would pay money of their own. When subscriptions hit half a million, some wondered if a plateau had been reached. But as the digital product improved, so did the numbers. And the news certainly helped. Like ratings for cable news, subscriptions surged during the 2016 presidential contest, and soared after the result. For the *Times*, the “Trump bump”—more than 300,000 new subscriptions in the final quarter—would drop off in 2017. Subscriptions since have been roughly steady and mostly robust, nearing the halfway point on the road to 10 million.

“There is no greater media success story of the last eight years than the *Times* paywall,” says Jack Shafer, the media columnist for Politico.

But the breakthrough brought more than money. It also brought a direct connection with the reader, a channel bypassing everything the Internet (and especially social media) has put in the way. As a subscriber, you’re going somewhere specific for news, rather than finding it placed in front of you by an overpolitical uncle, or an algorithm engineered to encourage outrage because outrage means more time on the site. You have a direct line to a professional news organization, one with biases and flaws but also something else: responsibility for what it publishes.

Facebook and Instagram do not have the same responsibility. Neither does YouTube or any other part of the Internet. Congress absolved online platforms for most of what gets posted on them in Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996. At the time it passed, tech still looked like a force for unmitigated good.

What followed, of course, was a hard lesson in human nature,

^  
Sulzberger found a partner in *Times* editor Baquet, left

## Social media obscures the civic impulse at the core of the news business

one with deep consequences for democracies, relying as they do on agreed-upon facts. The ambient confusion has been exploited by authoritarians, who label critical news coverage “fake” and push their preferred version of reality through state media, social media or private outlets that have sold out.

News organizations are businesses too, but—crucially—businesses based on providing what a citizen needs to know. The core transaction of a traditional news organization is a wholesome one, grounded in what might be called the civic impulse. That impulse is what drives editors to argue among themselves

about what is worthy of the front page and what stirs a reader to examine it. It’s also what impelled the Sulzberger family to shovel money into a newsroom after it ceased to be lucrative.

Why didn’t this happen elsewhere? A generation ago, family ownership of a newspaper was regarded as what protected quality journalism from the predations of the markets the way the First Amendment protected it from the government. But most of the great newspaper families—the Chandlers of the *Los Angeles Times*, the Bancrofts of the *Wall Street Journal*, the Bingham of Louisville—did not survive even the flush times. “It’s usually a case of family members being really unhappy or the wrong person being put in the job with the result that the company blows up,” says Donald Graham, whose family sold the *Washington Post* to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos in 2013. “And that has never been the case at the *New York Times*. I’m happy to talk about A.G., I think this guy is aces.”



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# Business

The fourth generation of the Ochs-Sulzbergers, led by A.G.'s father, took pains to ensure that other branches of the family were involved in choosing the new publisher, even hiring a psychologist specializing in dynastic succession in family-owned firms. When the competition formally opened sometime in 2015, all three cousins—Dolnick, Perpich and A.G.—raised their hands. And all remain with the company, where they are viewed with respect and some wonder.

“The three of them, it’s like they were grown in a lab,” says James Bennet, who edits the *Times* editorial page. “They’re young, but they kind of came of age as all this disruption was happening, and they must have been conscious that on their watch, whether the New York *Times* is going to survive is going to be a real question.”

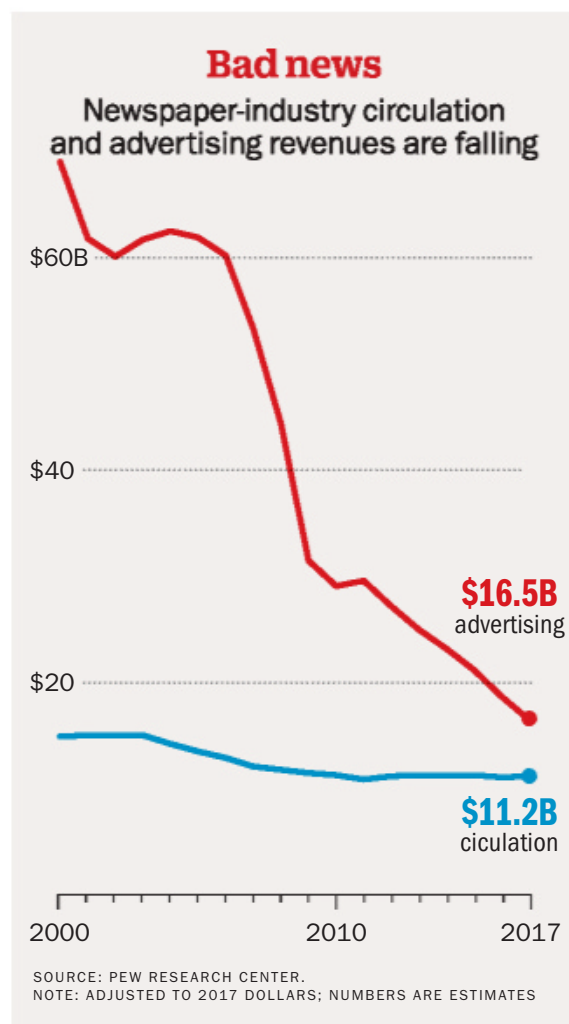
**THE EXISTENTIAL CHALLENGES** keep on coming. With murder surpassing combat as the leading cause of on-the-job fatality for journalists, Sulzberger no longer waits for a White House invitation to confront a U.S. President who demonizes independent reporters and cossets despots who jail and even kill them. The publisher noted in a Sept. 23 op-ed that the State Department has ceased warning U.S. journalists who face arrest abroad. When the *Times*' Cairo bureau chief was threatened, he had to be spirited to the airport by the Irish embassy.

Yet the primary destroyer of journalists remains the Internet, especially at the community level, where 1,800 local papers have been shuttered since 2004 and hedge funds joust to wring those that remain. To turn that around, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent by charities, think tanks, and even Google and Facebook, which have a business interest in quality content: when Facebook set up a news feed highlighting local stories, it discovered a third of Americans lived where it could not find the five stories per day needed for “Today In.”

The responsible rich are also helping, investing in papers in Boston, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and more. Should a proven template for subscriptions emerge, it’s not impossible to imagine someone of extravagant means seeding it in communities across the country the way public libraries were by Andrew Carnegie a century ago.

Is the *Times* that model? “If we can do 5 million, I do sort of wonder whether other American newspapers shouldn’t be aiming a bit higher,” says Thompson, the *Times* CEO. “I don’t think our advantages are so unique that others couldn’t do it. Journalism which can’t be paid for isn’t going to exist.”

It may be a question of scale. “The Internet, traditionally, is winner take most,” notes Rich Greenfield, a media-technology analyst. And Jodi Rudoren left her job as a senior *Times* strategist to edit the *Forward* to try to discover a way for smaller media like the Jewish news outlet to survive. “The



*Times* model may work for a couple of places,” she says, “but it absolutely will not work for the many journalistic enterprises we need for a vibrant democracy.”

One challenge of a “subscriber-led” approach is all too evident in the age of Trump: people take sides. The *Times*' marketing slogan—“The truth is worth it”—itself walks the line between fearless reporting and confrontation. On Twitter there were calls to cancel subscriptions in early August over a stenographic headline (TRUMP URGES UNITY VS. RACISM) that was changed for the next edition. “They are completely reader-focused now,” says Shafer. “And I think that’s why Dean Baquet went on his groveling tour to explain what was just a sh-tty headline.”

In many ways, the fevered attention signals the stakes—for the leader of a free press, in a fraught world. So for the *Times*, perhaps the trickiest part may be signing subscribers who do not fret about the Republic but are keen on movies, science, books—the world the *Times* has always offered. A parenting app is being weighed. Among the opportunities of the digital world is leaving behind baggage, including the long-held reputation as an “elite” read. “There’s a percentage of people who will listen to *The Daily* every day who don’t know it’s from the New York *Times*,” Sulzberger says. And each can become a subscriber for \$15 a month—less, with promotions. That’s why Facebook, Instagram and the rest still feature in the *Times*' strategy. Those first 10 free stories have to appear somewhere, and the *Times* gathers page views on the scale of Fox News and CNN. The idea is to cast the net as widely as possible for subscribers and then, with each scroll, tap and alert, become as much a part of daily life through the phone as the newspaper once was.

That means treating the reader with a certain deference. If your data is mined, it’s done relatively lightly. The *Times* invites advertisers to buy ads in stories based not on who’s reading them but on the emotional response a story evokes, like “happy” or “inspiration.” In May, a *Times* rep informed an auditorium of advertising buyers, “We now have more than 18 emotions available.” What advertisers are really buying is something rare on the Internet: a committed relationship.

Only subscribers, for instance, get access to “Times Insider,” featuring interviews with reporters and behind-the-scenes accounts of major stories. It’s a daily, online version of something older, the annual Family Assembly, when members of the Sulzberger family gather at the *Times* headquarters for a day.

“We invite a foreign correspondent every year to talk about what they do,” says Sulzberger, explaining how it works. “And the reporters are always asking me, like, ‘What should I expect? What’s the crowd going to be like?’ And I would say, ‘Like, they’re just the biggest fans of the New York *Times*.’” □



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**Celina Padilla**  
holds Amina after  
an overnight stay  
at M&M Daycare  
in the Bronx; the  
facility provides  
24-hour coverage  
for parents who  
work the night shift





# Society

## AT WHAT COST?

THE BRUTAL MATH OF CARING  
FOR CHILDREN IN AMERICA

BY KATIE REILLY AND BELINDA LUSCOMBE

### OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN

On assignment for TIME, in partnership with Fotografiska New York, photojournalist Anastasia Taylor-Lind spent five months embedded with New York City families and caregivers to document the often invisible village required to raise a child; a larger collection of this work will be on display at Fotografiska New York in 2020.

PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY ANASTASIA  
TAYLOR-LIND

ASHLEY ALCARAZ REMEMBERS WHEN SHE STARTED TO regret entrusting her infant daughter Paysen to an unlicensed in-home day care when she returned to work. She found out her daughter had been sleeping on the floor in a house where dogs and cats roamed around, and she worried that older toddlers might step on the baby. After her request that the baby sleep in a crib was ignored, she pulled Paysen out, but the day care had been the most affordable nearby option and Alcaraz had already used up her allotted three weeks of paid maternity leave—in addition to three weeks of unpaid leave—from the Iowa hospital where she works as an X-ray technologist. Desperate for trustworthy care, she enrolled Paysen at Tipton Adaptive Daycare in Tipton, Iowa, which was more expensive, at \$640 per month—about 18% of her income—but the most affordable licensed childcare available. It was worth the cost, Alcaraz felt, because she could tell the staff cared about her daughter, greeting the 16-month-old by name each morning.

Still, Alcaraz, 25, and her boyfriend now often run out of money for groceries while paying the day-care bill. “Right now, it’s paycheck to paycheck,” Alcaraz says. “It’s a struggle.”

Affordable childcare is at once one of the most tantalizing promises of contemporary American life, and the most broken. Our modern economy cannot function without a system for the nurturing of our youngest citizens—as of 2017 there were nearly 15 million children under 6 in this country with all available parents in the workforce. But for everyone except the very wealthy, childcare is ruinously expensive. In 28 states and the District of Columbia, one year of infant care, on average, sets parents



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back as much as a year at a four-year public college, and nationally childcare costs on average between \$9,000 and \$9,600 annually, according to the advocacy organization Child Care Aware. Many parents spend far more. In Boston, 36-year-old Amy Deveau will spend \$21,000 this year, a third of her salary, on day care for her 2-year-old—more than she would spend on tuition and fees if her daughter were enrolled at the University of Massachusetts. “What’s crazy is that you have 18 years to plan for your child to go to college and put together your savings accounts and work on loans,” Deveau says. “You don’t have the luxury of having 18 years to plan for day care.”

Nearly 2 million parents had to leave work, change jobs or turn down a job offer because of childcare obligations in 2016, according to an analysis by the Center for American Progress (CAP), a left-leaning think tank. America’s rickety childcare infrastructure is a drain on parents, who lose up to four times their salary in lifetime earnings for every year they’re out of the workforce, but even more of a drag on the U.S. economy, costing it \$57 billion every year in lost earnings, productivity and revenue, according to a report published in January by ReadyNation, a nonprofit advocacy group of business executives.

The burden of childcare beleaguers economic growth on two fronts, tamping down the productivity of citizens as well as pushing more of them onto taxpayer-sponsored programs such as SNAP (formerly known as food stamps), WIC (benefits for low-income mothers) and TANF (welfare). Cruelly, it’s usually the more impoverished who find it most difficult to afford childcare and thus advance their careers and become more prosperous, further stymieing economic mobility. But perhaps the most damaging punch that unaffordable childcare is dealing to the U.S. economy is its diminishing of future generations. Young Americans are having fewer children—the 2018 birth rate was the lowest in 32 years—and according to a survey conducted by Morning Consult for the *New York Times*, the expense of childcare is the No. 1 reason.

Yet caregivers can’t just charge less. So confounding is the childcare economy that despite the sticker shock for parents, looking after children remains a very poorly paid job. Deborah VanderGaast,



**Rachel Kahan nurses her daughter Michaela, while nanny Annie Nabbie trims the child's toenails. Nabbie immigrated from Trinidad, and last year Kahan co-signed her green-card application; when it was approved, both women stood in Kahan's kitchen and cried**





Deki Choden left her two sons to work as a nanny in America—one attends boarding school in India; the other lives with family in Bhutan. During their monthly phone call, Choden's charge Jamison, left, asks her older son if he misses his mom. No, he says. He needs to focus on his studies; he's 12

‘IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD, AND WE DON’T LIVE IN A VILLAGE ANYMORE. WE HAVE TO HIRE THE VILLAGE.’

—Wakenda Tyler, surgeon





**Baby Doll Tucker reads to kids before bedtime at M&M Daycare in the Bronx. Another caregiver reassures them: “The sun goes down, and when the sun comes up, Mommy will be here.”**



**Stephanie Chang, who teaches 2- and 3-year-olds at Little Star of Broome Street in Manhattan, comforts Louis; Chang doubts she'll ever be able to afford to have children of her own**

the director of Tipton Adaptive Daycare, where Alcaraz sends Paysen, says the business model just isn't sustainable without subsidies. VanderGaast, 51, charges \$160 per week for full-time infant and toddler care—a rate she tries to keep affordable for parents—but she is barely breaking even. She says about 25 families have past-due balances. She sets up payment plans and helps parents with childcare assistance applications. Sometimes she asks them to help her with odd jobs at the day care to pay down their debt.

“It must appear I’m a terrible business manager. I know that common sense would be to kick out a family when they get behind on their bill,” she says, but she understands families are struggling. State licensing requirements that ensure safety and quality mean she can have no less than one worker for every four children under 2, and one worker for every six children under 3—she pays

15 employees, starting at \$7.25 to \$10 an hour. She can't skimp on health and safety inspections, nor can she cut back on food, knowing that many of her parents already rely on food stamps. She loses money on every infant and 2-year-old in her care. After doing payroll one week in October, VanderGaast says, her business bank account had \$9.30 remaining, and she hadn't yet ordered the day care's groceries.

At the same time, she knows she isn't paying her staff enough: “My employees have to rely on food stamps and childcare assistance themselves because they can't afford childcare because I can't pay them a living wage.” Ten of the 15 workers have second jobs. Turnover is high enough that she finds herself training new people nearly every week. She doesn't blame workers for leaving. “Walmart pays better, McDonald's pays better, the grocery store pays better,” VanderGaast says.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

estimates that nearly 1.2 million people are employed in childcare in America, not including the countless number who are self-employed. For those who show up on the books, the median annual income is only \$23,240. “There's a huge demand for unskilled workers who are willing to do these jobs,” says Aparna Mathur, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank. Ideally, positions would be filled by highly skilled teachers with early-childhood education degrees. “You'd think the market should fill that gap by enticing workers with higher wages, but for some reason that doesn't happen,” Mathur says. She points to the heavy regulations of the industry—necessary to guarantee good conditions for kids, but a financial burden on childcare providers.

Kathleen Gerson, a sociologist at New York University who studies families and work, calls caregiving a “canary in the coal





**The New York Foundling's Crisis Nursery houses children whose parents are experiencing an emergency. "These kids become our kids when they come in here," says caregiver Dionne Carter-Granger; at home, her husband takes care of their daughter while she works**

mine" for other socioeconomic challenges in America. "It's warning us of not just a care crisis, and a childcare crisis, but a larger crisis of what it means to live a sane and balanced life that allows people both to find dignity in work and also build the strong, stable families that they hope to have," she says.

Indeed, what feels like a private calamity in each home is actually the result of some of society's most thorny unsolved issues—the often ignored rights of immigrant workers, the persistently uneven division of labor between men and women, inequalities based on race and socioeconomic status, and the glass ceiling women face in the workplace. Successive presidential Administrations have done little more than enrage parents with the lack of progress on the issue, but a growing understanding of the broader economic impact of the inefficient childcare system is finally leading

to more urgency to find a remedy. President Trump's Administration has doubled the child tax credit and the size of grants given to states to subsidize childcare. As the 2020 presidential race heats up, a new raft of suggestions has been launched, from Senator Elizabeth Warren's well-defined universal-childcare program, to commitments from Kamala Harris, Beto O'Rourke, Amy Klobuchar and Cory Booker to enact the Child Care for Working Families Act, to Trump's proposed one-time \$1 billion injection to build out childcare infrastructure. The only consensus seems to be that the current situation is untenable. As Ivanka Trump, who is leading the Administration on childcare reform, tells TIME, "You've got a fundamentally broken system."

**TO ESCAPE** the paycheck-to-paycheck cycle, Alcaraz is considering a new job that would pay more but require her to

move her family around the country every few months. She wants to have a sibling for Paysen, but without higher pay, she knows she won't be able to afford the care. "You'd have to pay double, and that would be almost 45% of my income," she says.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers childcare "affordable" if it costs no more than 7% of a family's income. It's a figure greeted with a dry laugh by most U.S. parents. Nearly two-thirds of them—and 95% of low-income parents—spend more than that, according to a 2018 report by the Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy at Brandeis University. And the problem has been growing worse for decades. More than 60% of families surveyed by Care.com in 2019 reported that their childcare costs had increased in the past year.

The federal government has twice attempted a comprehensive childcare program—similar to those in Sweden or



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France—only to later dismantle both efforts. The 1940 Lanham Act established a network of childcare centers after millions of women joined the workforce during World War II. The initiative was limited; 3,000 centers served 130,000 children, far fewer than the estimated 1 million children who needed care. But an analysis of the program by Arizona State University associate professor Chris Herbst found that it produced “sizable increases in maternal employment” for several years after the program was dismantled at the end of the war. At the time, there were calls for a permanent version. “Many thought [these centers] were purely a war emergency measure,” former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in a 1945 newspaper column. “A few of us had an inkling that perhaps they were a need which was constantly with us, but one that we had neglected to face in the past.”

In 1971, Congress passed the Comprehensive Child Development Act with bipartisan support. The law would have developed a network of federally funded day-care centers, offering free care to the poorest families and subsidized care on a sliding scale for others. But it was derailed by President Richard Nixon’s veto, which warned it would divide families, diminish parental involvement and “commit the vast moral authority of the National Government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing over against the family-centered approach.”

Yet recent polls suggest that view no longer reflects the bulk of the populace. Most married couples with children both work outside the home now, and more than 75% of voters said they would support increased congressional funding for childcare and early learning, according to a CAP poll last year. Attitudes toward working mothers have also shifted. In 2018, according to the General Social Survey, only 28% of respondents believed that preschool children suffered if their mothers worked outside the home, down from about two-thirds in 1975.

And yet, the childcare landscape in America continues to resemble a curio store, full of options that are too expensive, too low-quality or that simply don’t work. Eventually one parent, usually the mother, gives up her job, often unwillingly. A 2005 *Harvard Business Review* analysis found that 43% of highly qualified women

with children left the workforce. The effect of this resonates through decades. If a 26-year-old American woman who earns \$40,508—the current average age for becoming a first-time mother, and the median salary for her age—leaves the labor force for five years for caregiving, she will lose more than \$650,000 in wages, wage growth and retirement benefits over her lifetime, according to a CAP tool that calculates the “hidden cost” of childcare. And that doesn’t take into account the occupational toll: the lost years of experience and networking, the forgone promotions, the difficulties of re-entry.

Of course, many women would prefer to stay home with their children but cannot afford to do so. (Men’s willingness to work is not affected by children, studies show.) In 2018, according to the Institute for Family Studies, only 28% of married mothers with children under 18 said that working full time was ideal.

Nevertheless, very few households can get by on a single paycheck. Before she even got pregnant, Wakenda Tyler, an orthopedic surgical oncologist and the primary breadwinner in her New York City family, knew that leaving her job would not be an option. Her husband, David Van Arsdale, is a sociology professor who splits his time between New York City and Syracuse, about four hours’ drive away. They’re well paid, but Tyler needs to live close to the hospital, and New York is expensive. Van Arsdale initially balked at hiring a nanny, but neither parent could do their job without one. Jasieth Beckford now cares for the couple’s 10-month-old son every day, making \$22 an hour plus overtime, totaling about \$55,000 a year. “It takes a village to raise a child, and we don’t live in a village anymore,” Tyler told her husband. “We have to hire the village.”

**THE VILLAGE**, of course, also has kids, who need their own village. Beckford started nannying when her 26-year-old son was 3, relying on her sister to raise him while she worked. “If I’m a nanny,” she says, “how am I going to afford a nanny?”

In Iowa, Shellby White works with 2-year-olds at the Tipton day-care center, teaching them to recognize colors, sounds and feelings, while her 8-year-old son is at school. She quit her previous job to care for her son when he was 2, because his grandmother became too ill to watch







Wakenda Tyler  
kisses her husband  
David Van Arsdale  
outside their home  
in Harlem before  
heading to work as  
a surgeon; their son  
Myles will spend  
his day with nanny  
Jasieth Beckford





‘IF I’M A NANNY,  
HOW AM I GOING  
TO AFFORD A  
NANNY?’

—Jasieth Beckford, caregiver

**Night nurse Tamiesha Graham Baker shows new mom Kelly Howell a feeding technique to try with baby Rooney, on Long Island; before work, Baker says good night to her own 10-year-old daughter, Nyiesha, who stays with an aunt until morning**





**“The most challenging part is leaving my daughter,” Baker says of working in childcare. “I’d like to tuck her in. You’re tucking in another baby.” After spending the night with Howell, she commutes back to the Bronx in the early morning to walk Nyiesha to school**

him full time, and the day-care centers in her area were either full or too expensive. She loves her job at Tipton Adaptive but earns just \$10.05 an hour, making ends meet only because her husband works 75-hour weeks at his two jobs.

“We’re just seen as glorified babysitters, when we’re probably one of the most important parts of any working parent’s day,” says White, 29. “We’re keeping your kids alive, you know, we’re making sure they’re thriving.” And yet she sympathizes with parents. The cost of childcare is what makes her pause whenever she and her husband discuss having a second child.

Today, two-thirds of families with children under 18 rely on both parents to work, with many putting in longer hours. Demand for childcare is at an all-time high. But wages for childcare workers have remained largely stagnant, increasing by just 1% from 1997 to 2013 and barely keeping pace with the rising cost of living, according to a 2014 report by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California, Berkeley. During that time, the average weekly cost of care for children under 5 more than doubled, according to the same report. Recently, childcare workers have seen a moderate increase in pay because of new minimum-wage laws, earning a median hourly wage of \$11.17 in 2018. But childcare work is still among the lowest paid professions, and families of caregivers are more than twice as likely as other families to live in poverty, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

Many childcare workers are especially vulnerable to exploitation because of undocumented immigration status. Edith Mendoza—a Filipino immigrant and full-time organizer for Damayan, which advocates for migrant workers—arrived in New York in 2015 with the promise of a good job, only to find herself cooking, cleaning and nannying four children for about \$4 an hour, 80 to 90 hours a week. “I was a slave,” says Mendoza, 53. “They treated me as not fully human.”

Even well-paid caregivers make sacrifices when it comes to their own children. When her son reached kindergarten, Beckford paid a retired grandmother to watch him after school in her home. Beckford paid the woman about \$60 per week, and sometimes paid in groceries or sandwiches. It was not a licensed



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day care, and Beckford sometimes felt uneasy about the lack of regulation, but it was all she could afford. “My child suffered because I spent less time with him than I spent with other people’s kids,” she says now. “It’s the truth.”

**THE ADAGE** that the children are our future isn’t often thought of in terms of gross domestic product. But quality affordable childcare is directly related to the health of our future economy. A 2017 white paper from the U.S. Census Bureau that followed more than 2 million children for five years found those who were in state-subsidized childcare centers were less likely to repeat a year of school than those in family day care or with relatives or babysitters.

Studies also show that enrollment in high-quality early-childhood education programs before the age of 5—a critical period for brain development—affects the lives of children years later. A 2017 meta-analysis led by researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, which looked at studies conducted from 1960 to 2016, found that children who participated in such programs were less likely to be placed in special-education classes or to be held back a grade, and more likely to graduate from high school.

“Building the children’s potential is about building the country’s potential,” says Betsey Stevenson, professor of economics and public policy at the University of Michigan. “People usually take low unemployment and rising wages as a time to start families,” she says, but that’s not happening. She believes today’s childcare crisis will have effects for decades. “There’s an entire generation of people that are putting off, perhaps forever, having children because they can’t manage to figure out how it would work.” The data supports Stevenson, with one exception. In 2017, families with incomes of less than \$10,000 had higher birth rates than all others. In the long run, this could cause a fundamental economic shift, or as Stevenson puts it: “Basically, the middle-class babies won’t get born.”

Deveau, the mother in Boston, says she and her husband won’t even talk about having a second child before her daughter is in preschool. “It drives me bananas when people say, ‘If you can’t

afford to have a child, don’t have it,’” she says. “I can afford to have a child, I just can’t afford to pay for their care for the first three years of their life. That shouldn’t be the benchmark for whether or not you should have children.”

Conservative and liberal economists agree that an effective solution must come from some form of government investment in childcare, as well as better paid-parental-leave policies so people can afford to look after their own children for at least the first few months.

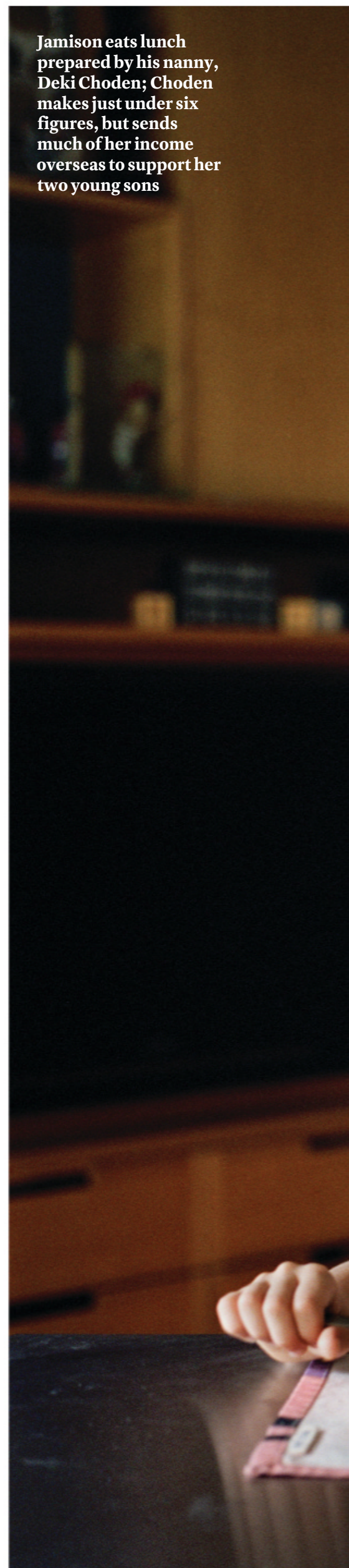
The Trump Administration is currently hosting a series of roundtables with parents, childcare providers and state regulators to explore the challenges that childcare businesses face. This will culminate with a White House summit in November to discuss possible action. “We’re working with governors to see if there are policies in place that limit the supply [of childcare providers] without actually benefiting the quality,” says Ivanka Trump.

On the other side of the aisle, Senator Warren set a standard among Democratic presidential candidates when she unveiled a proposal for a wealth tax on incomes above \$50 million, the revenue from which would be used to fund universal childcare. Her plan, which would cost \$70 billion per year, would ensure free childcare for families earning less than 200% of the federal poverty line and would cap childcare costs at 7% of household income for all other families.

As Democratic presidential candidates have cycled through Iowa in recent months, talking more about childcare and paid family leave than in recent election cycles, VanderGaast sees an opening. The Iowa day-care director, who also sits on the Cedar County Democratic Committee, has tried to make her case to them directly. She invited Jill Biden to her day-care center during a scheduled visit to Tipton. She met Warren, Klobuchar and O’Rourke, warning that universal pre-K, alone, would be insufficient for parents and detrimental to day cares like hers.

As she notices more local conversation about day-care deserts and discussions of childcare affordability on presidential-debate stages, she is hopeful things might start to change. Her day care—and several million American families—are depending on it. □

Jamison eats lunch prepared by his nanny, Deki Choden; Choden makes just under six figures, but sends much of her income overseas to support her two young sons









# A Window on China

Veteran publisher celebrates 70 years of telling China's story

By Yuan Yuan & Ji Jing

When Paul White first came to Beijing, his plan was to stay for a year. That was in 1984. In 2019, "I'm still here," the 76-year-old said with a smile.

He arrived from Yorkshire, the UK, to work as a copyeditor for Xinhua News Agency, getting the job partly due to having studied Chinese as his major at the University of London.

After his stint at Xinhua, White moved to the Foreign Languages Press (FLP), a publishing house affiliated with the China International Publishing Group (CIPG). Sharing Chinese thoughts with the outside world through translation since has been his lifetime pursuit. His most recent work is a more modern translation of *The Analects of Confucius*, selected sayings of the Chinese philosopher thought to have been compiled by his followers. The book came out with an audio.

White's plan is to improve his Chinese and translate more. "I'll probably do it forever and improve, I hope, every day. There's only one way to learn Chinese characters. That's to see them every day."

The CIPG, a Beijing-based publishing conglomerate intended for international readers, was founded on the same day as the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. Despite changes in the international landscape as well as in the media over the past seven decades, White and his Chinese colleagues at the CIPG have remained true to the group's founding mission to share China's story.

## Making China heard

President Xi Jinping sent a letter congratulating the CIPG on its 70th anniversary, recognizing the group's role in making China's voice heard and promoting exchanges with foreign countries.

Xi said since China is increasingly connected to the outside world, the CIPG should carry forward its fine traditions, improve its capability and develop into a world-class, comprehensive international communication institution.

The CIPG was established as the international news division of the Central



British editor and translator Paul White at his home in Beijing

Government's national press administration. Qiao Guanhua, who later became minister of foreign affairs, headed the division. A group of Chinese professionals including foreign language experts, as well as foreign editors, were pooled together to create a channel for international readers to know more about China.

Many Chinese classics were translated into foreign languages at the CIPG. Prominent translator Yang Xianyi worked at the CIPG for decades with his British wife Gladys. They translated many masterpieces, including the 18th-century novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*, into English.

To present a real-time image of China to the world, the CIPG started publishing a series of periodicals in different languages. They included *China Pictorial*, a multilingual monthly magazine launched in 1950, using Chairman Mao Zedong's calligraphy for the Chinese title. *China Reconstructs* debuted in 1952, and is currently published as *China Today* in several foreign languages including English, French and Spanish, as well as in Chinese. *Beijing Review* was founded in

1958 as China's first national newsweekly in English.

"I have witnessed the CIPG's development," former CIPG Vice President Huang Youyi said at a symposium in Beijing on September 4 to celebrate the 70th anniversary, recalling his work experience since 1975. "Today international communication is facing many challenges and we must work harder to deliver the real picture of China to the world."

Huang is one of the experts that finalized the English version of *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, a compilation of Xi's speeches, interviews, letters and other works from November 2012 to September 2017 published by the FLP in two volumes.

The first volume was launched at the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany in October 2014. The book has caught international attention.

"Xi's book speaks to China's vigorous domestic and international aspirations by offering some theoretically and practically important points on governance theory,"





Visitors at the CIPG pavilion at the Beijing International Book Fair on August 21

said Jon Taylor, a professor of political science at the University of Texas at San Antonio in the United States.

The second volume was released in October 2017. As of July, there had been 32 editions in 28 languages.

## Keeping pace

"We are ready to contribute more to introducing China to the world," CIPG President Du Zhanyuan said at the symposium. "To do so, we will continue developing talent, strengthening research and promoting integrated development."

In seven decades, the CIPG has produced about 80,000 kinds of books and magazines. It now publishes 34 magazines in 13 languages and produces over 4,000 book titles in more than 40 languages every year.

In 2000, China.org.cn, a website for news and information about China, was launched in 10 languages as the CIPG expanded online. Since then, there have been more multimedia projects like a series of short video

programs including *China Mosaic*, a commentary on topical issues related to China. The CIPG Digital Media Center was inaugurated in 2015 as part of efforts to embrace the new media, particularly social networking platforms.

The CIPG's think tank, the Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, collaborates with peers around the world and conducts research in international communication.

In addition, the CIPG hosts a variety of activities to increase the outreach of the Chinese culture. *People's China*, its Japanese-language monthly, has been organizing the Panda Cup Japan Youth Essay Contest in Japan since 2014.

Daichi Nakashima, one of the recent contestants, wrote a letter to Xi expressing his interest in the Chinese language and culture. In June, ahead of the G20 Summit in Osaka, Xi replied to him, asking young people in both countries to make contributions to bilateral relations.

"Today, we enjoy a larger stage to spread

China's stories and we are integrating more advanced technologies," Huang said. "Yet professional translators who know the cultures of both China and other countries are still crucial to improving our work."

White echoed Huang's view, saying good translation is essential to transmit Chinese culture abroad.

There is a large receptive audience for Chinese culture outside China, according to White. "Abroad, there are more people interested in ancient Chinese than you think, especially in the U.S.," he said.

Currently, the CIPG has 26 overseas branches in 14 countries and regions. "We will enhance cultural exchanges and make friends with people from all over the world with our events and publications," Du said. ■

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# Next Generation Leaders

*10 rising stars who are changing the world  
in politics, sports, fashion and more*

U.K.

## **Stormzy**

**Ambassador for grime**

By Reni Eddo-Lodge/London

MIDMORNING IN A LEAFY SUBURB ON the outskirts of southwest London, and Stormzy is feeding Enzo. The 26-year-old rapper bought the Rottweiler a year ago, when soaring fame made personal security a necessity that a very big dog could address while also giving a new celebrity a chance at staying grounded.

Michael Omari, better known as Stormzy, is one of Britain's most successful musicians and an ambassador for grime, a genre of music that emerged from the streets of multicultural London in the early 2000s and that is characterized by frenetic urgency. In 2017, an academic from the University of Westminster said it was on track to be "as disruptive and powerful as punk." The genre's most famous songs hurtle by at 140 beats per minute,

as much electronic music as hip-hop.

Stormzy's rise to fame has been almost as lightning-fast. In the past two years he has stacked up awards, enjoyed a No. 1 album, and in June became the first-ever British rapper to headline Glastonbury, one of the world's largest music festivals. His duet with Ed Sheeran, "Take Me Back to London," topped the British singles charts for five weeks this autumn.

When we meet in his home, Stormzy is initially a little distracted by Enzo, but he relaxes once the interview gets going. He seems in a philosophical mood. Of headlining Glastonbury, he says, "For the first time ever in my life, maybe in my career, I've achieved something and it's given me perfect peace."

Stormzy grew up in Norbury in southwest London. As a teenager, he absorbed grime culture by watching Channel U—the now defunct British satellite channel dedicated to U.K. hip-hop and grime—and rapping with his friends. He achieved exemplary exam grades in

*Michael Omari, 26,  
better known as  
Stormzy, has soared  
to fame as Britain  
begins to embrace  
grime music with  
open arms*

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
DAN WILTON







secondary school, something that has received significant media attention in the U.K. “They’re always a bit shocked that there’s academic brilliance in a young black South London brother with a street background,” he says. “If you saw a group of lads outside the chicken shop on push-bikes, I’m sure a lot of them are academically brilliant. Little did you know!”

Success didn’t come overnight. At 20, he got a job on an oil rig in the English port city of Southampton, and he remembers writing lyrics on Post-it notes while working. Within a year he made the decision to quit his job and pursue music full-time. It was 2014. “I don’t remember a crazy feeling of fear,” he says. “I remember feeling very sure that I’m a good MC. I didn’t ever feel stuck or at a dead end.”

It ended up being a good decision. His first EP, *Dreamers Disease*, won him a MOBO Award, Britain’s highest-profile honor celebrating music of black origin. Next came “Shut Up,” an improvised rap that catapulted him to nationwide fame, garnering millions of views on YouTube. In 2017, his debut studio album, *Gang Signs and Prayer*, went straight to No. 1 on the U.K. album charts, the first grime album to do so in the genre’s 20-year history. Grime had arguably found its first mainstream star.

Now riding the crest of his fame, Stormzy is determined not to pull the ladder up behind him. Instead, he is dedicating himself to bringing greater visibility to a wider community of black musicians, artists and creators in Britain. “There’s always been a kind of lack of spotlight and shine on the black British side of British culture,” he says. “[But] there’s a whole world of it ... It’s a beautiful thing, and it’s coming of age right now.”

**IN THE EARLY DAYS** of grime, the music was broadcast through pirate radio stations, MP3 files on mobile phones, and word of mouth. By 2003, the genre earned a badge of establishment legitimacy when 19-year-old Dylan Mills, also known as Dizzee Rascal, won the prestigious high-end Mercury Music Prize for his first album, *Boy in da Corner*. It is widely credited as one of the pioneering albums of the genre.

Grime’s standout stars were, and still are, overwhelmingly young and black, with working-class roots. It was



Stormzy performs the headline set at Glastonbury Festival on June 28, wearing a stab-proof Union Jack vest designed by Banksy

a combination that invited intense scrutiny. The genre became maligned by certain politicians. The same year Dizzee Rascal won the Mercury Prize, Britain’s then Culture Minister Kim Howells linked the deaths of two teenagers to the British rap scene. By 2006, David Cameron, then the Conservative Party leader, was criticizing BBC Radio 1’s Saturday-night hip-hop show for “encouraging people to carry guns and knives.” London’s Metropolitan Police had introduced a risk-assessment document named Form 696, targeted at musical events that “predominantly feature DJs or MCs performing to a recorded backing track.” The form required each performer to be checked against a police database before taking the stage. Most controversially, until 2009, it asked for the details of the





audience's ethnicity. Until it was lifted in 2017, Form 696 effectively muted the British grime scene. Gigs were pulled at short notice, and performers struggled to make a living.

"I know I'm the product of bare injustice," Stormzy says of his predecessors who struggled through the genre's leaner times. "There are so many iconic, legendary, more influential grime songs that are never going to sell as much records as I've sold." He is sensitive to the issues faced by those who came before him. "This is why I'm always so thankful for being in the position I am. I feel like all those artists or public figures or celebrities who went through that, had to go through that ... they didn't have the luxury of being free with their music, and they had to bite that bullet for me.

So I love and respect all those people, for all their decisions."

For the most part, grime has yet to break into the U.S. mainstream, though rapper Tinie Tempah made a shot with his debut U.S. single, "Written in the Stars," which peaked at No. 12 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in 2010. Meanwhile, Drake's 2017 album *More Life* featured several grime artists, giving Skepta and Giggs a major boost among North American audiences.

But grime is already finding its place outside the U.K.—and the U.S. could be next. "Wherever there's underground culture or music, grime has a place," Stormzy says, referring to grime scenes bubbling up in Denmark, Sweden and Australia.

The British government seems to agree. In 2019, a report from a U.K. par-

liamentary committee called grime "one of the U.K.'s most exciting musical exports." Stormzy's success signifies Britain welcoming the genre with open arms, something crystallized by his joining the ranks of Adele, Radiohead and Coldplay as a headliner of Glastonbury. His set transported the dense streets of South London to a field in agrarian southwest England. He took to the stage adorned in a stab-proof vest decorated with a black-and-white Union Jack, designed by the anonymous street artist Banksy.

Stormzy was the first black British solo artist to headline the festival. He says he drew inspiration from Beyoncé's *Homecoming* headlining set at Coachella in 2018. "Not in terms of anything to do with how it sounded or looked," he says. "Trying to imitate Beyoncé, that's a fool's game. Just in terms of quality, and impact." For those familiar with both black British and African-American imagery, the similarities between the two performances were clear. Each felt like a celebration of rich aspects of the culture that haven't always found a way into the spotlight. At Coachella, Beyoncé brought with her the marching bands of historically black universities and colleges. At Glastonbury, Stormzy brought with him black gospel singers and ballet dancers, and snippets of speeches from a black British politician and black British author.

"I wanted it to be the pinnacle of my career, my defining moment," Stormzy says. The set lived up to that. In the *New Yorker*, author Zadie Smith wrote, "For this was about arrival: of a king and his court and the many, many people who have hoped for this day, when the hyphenated 'Black-British' would appear, to the English ear, as permanent and central a condition as 'African-American.'"

During his time onstage, he took the unusual step of creating an interlude in which he mentioned all of the major grime artists who had paved the way for his success, as well as his lesser-known contemporaries. "I proper felt like I needed to do that," he explains. "There's been this historical thing of letting one black person in at a time."

**STORMZY'S COMMITMENT** to collectivism goes beyond shouting out his fellow grime artists on Glastonbury's main



stage. In the past two years, alongside his work in music, he has launched Merky Books, a publishing imprint with Penguin Random House U.K., as well as partnering with Cambridge University to launch the Stormzy Scholarship, funding the tuition fees and living costs of two black students during their degree studies. “There’s a whole side of blackness and black Britishness that doesn’t often fall under the kind of umbrella term that everyone uses of ‘black culture,’” he says. “It’s like black culture almost becomes music, acting, sports and just kind of celebrity and whatever. I was like, Yo, there’s theater, there’s literature, books, there’s ballet.”

Merky Books is Stormzy’s platform for aspiring black British writers, who often struggle for recognition in Britain. In 2016, research from the *Bookseller*, a publishing trade magazine, found that of the thousands of books published in Britain that year, fewer than 100 were by British authors of color. Through an annual New Writers Prize, Merky Books offers a clear route to publication. “We’re trying to push young black writers, first and foremost,” he says.

Meanwhile, the Stormzy Scholarship is intended to counter the overwhelming homogeneity of Britain’s most elite universities. From 2010 to 2015, around a quarter of Cambridge University’s 31 colleges failed to admit any black British students. The funding, which comes out of Stormzy’s own pocket, is open to both black and mixed-heritage students. The scholarship has encouraged a surge in applications, according to Jon Beard, director of Cambridge’s admissions office, who says the number of black students admitted in 2019 was a third higher than before the scholarship launched. “It’s made a real difference to our numbers already.”

Stormzy says he gets blowback for these kinds of initiatives: “What I always get is ‘Why black people?’ ‘Ah, it’s racist, why are you doing it for black people first?’” But black people, who make up 3% of the British population, still face structural and institutional barriers.

**‘I know it’s my purpose to just shine a light where I can, do something in whatever way, shape or form.’**

Most live in England’s most prosperous cities (including over 1 million in London) yet are chronically underrepresented in the cultural sphere. From 2006 to 2016, only 0.5% of roles in British films were played by black actors. In 2015, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found that only 0.2% of British reporters were black.

Stormzy can’t help but be inspired by the “dark, defining times” his country is currently experiencing, he says. The Brexit referendum in 2016 precipitated a surge of hate crimes and racial discrimination. “The more I become self-aware, it’s like we can’t shy away from [politics]. Especially being an artist who has a platform,” he says.

With that platform, Stormzy is determined to make room for others. In his lyrics, he often raps about his team and his family. When he received an invitation to be on the cover of *Elle UK*, he persuaded the magazine to shift the focus from himself to a group of black British talents whom he admired. “I was like, the only way this is gonna be sick is if we bring everyone,” he says. “Everyone” included model Leomie Anderson, poet Yrsa Daley-

Ward, antiviolence activist Temi Mwale and sprinter Dina Asher-Smith, who also happens to be Britain’s fastest woman.

“I know not all my peers have the luxury of having the opportunity to go on that sofa or go on that TV show or go on that radio show or do that, or be here, or be in this magazine,” he says. “I know I definitely do deserve all of these opportunities, 100%, I’ve worked for that. But also, I’m not the only black [person] ... There’s loads of us.”

Stormzy is invested in black excellence. It is clear that he intends to rise with his class, rather than out of it. “Being so championed by my community, I feel like everyone’s put me on this pedestal and, like, everyone’s put me on top of the world ... I know it’s my purpose to just shine a light where I can, do something where I can, just whatever I can, in whatever way, shape or form.” —*With reporting by SUYIN HAYNES/LONDON*



OMAR VICTOR DIOP—GALERIE MAGNIN-A, PARIS





SENEGAL

## Selly Raby Kane

*Celebrating African design*

By Suyin Haynes

For Selly Raby Kane, Dakar has always been more than home. “It’s central in the things I create,” the 32-year-old artist and fashion designer says of the Senegalese capital. “It’s a huge source of inspiration, and I have just been fascinated by its history.”

Kane’s interest in history has informed much of her creative output. Her first official clothing collection in 2012 in Dakar gained attention for its juxtaposition of the traditional with the futuristic, incorporating designs from military attire and urban street fashion, as well as fantasy costume and sci-fi influences.

Just three years earlier Kane had enrolled in fashion school in Paris. “I was searching for my voice, and it gradually grew into the techniques I’m using today,” she says of the 2012 collection. After Beyoncé was photographed wearing a kimono designed by Kane in 2016, the designer’s popularity soared. In late 2017 she opened her showroom in Dakar, and her garments now sell in Europe, the U.S. and Nigeria.

As Kane’s star has risen, she has experimented with other art forms. Her 2017 virtual-reality short film *The Other Dakar* was a tribute to Senegalese mythology and the city’s hidden stories. Earlier this year, when Ikea commissioned 10 African designers to create a range of homeware products, Kane fashioned a basket designed to look like braided hair. “It was a beautiful ritual to explore, and the bond it creates between two people was very inspiring to me.”

Kane’s latest clothing collection builds on this exploration of her Senegalese heritage. She was inspired by a landmark 2018 report commissioned by France’s President Emmanuel Macron recommending the repatriation of artifacts from French institutions back to their original sites in sub-Saharan Africa. “It made me realize that in each artifact and archive is encoded a type of knowledge and a small fragment of history that informs you of a past vision of the world.”

Kane credits some of her success to belonging to several art collectives. “Fashion is not the most caring industry, so being in my city and having that space around me was super nourishing,” Kane says. Now, she is making that space for others. Her showroom in Dakar regularly hosts students for internships, and also reserves a space for young designers from Dakar to showcase and sell their pieces.

Kane belongs to what she describes as a “trans-African community of young creatives” in Dakar and cities like Lagos, Nigeria; Nairobi, Kenya; and Kigali, Rwanda. And her interest in history also keeps her looking to the future—she wants to “create imaginary worlds, and infuse them with knowledge of worlds that have existed and still exist. I think that’s a good recipe.”





JAPAN

## Aori Nishimura

### Board force

By Charlie Campbell

YOU DON'T BECOME ONE OF THE world's top skateboarders without taking a few tumbles. But Aori Nishimura knew this fall was different. She was skateboarding in Los Angeles in 2017 when she landed a trick badly, tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee.

Just three months earlier, Nishimura, then 16, had won gold in the X Games, in Minneapolis. Now the wheels had come off just as her dream of stardom was gathering speed. "Skateboarding—it is my life," Nishimura says at a skate park in her hometown of Tokyo. "I was terrified that my career was over."

Nishimura underwent reconstructive ligament surgery and spent the next six months in L.A. in painstaking rehabilitation. But she eventually returned to competition hungry to make up for lost time. In January, Nishimura won gold at the Street League Skateboarding championship in Rio de Janeiro, landing a physics-defying "lipslide" trick in a blur of dyed blond hair and cargo pants. Still just 18, she's on course to represent Japan when the Olympics arrive in her homeland next summer and skateboarding makes its debut at the Games. It's also Nishimura's first time representing Japan on such a level. "I am very excited," she says.

Nishimura got her first taste of skating at the age of 7 after picking up her father's board, which was lying around the house. Her older sister Kotone also skates professionally, and the desire

Nishimura performs a backside feeble grind at the Street League Skateboarding world championship in Rio de Janeiro, on Jan. 12

NISHIMURA: PAULO MACEDO; KHAN: LEXEY SMALL-REDUX/THE NEW YORK TIMES





to keep up with her sibling helped Nishimura reach new goals. “[My family] have always been right by my side supporting me,” she says.

Not all in Japan are so fortunate. Young people typically face a mountain of pressure to do well at school, join a top university and be recruited by a big firm. Pursuits outside of this unyielding career path are rarely encouraged. Those who struggle academically, or wilt under the pressure, find themselves on society’s margins and can suffer deep trauma.

Nishimura often receives messages on social media from fans around the country, saying they admire her for turning her passion into a real career. “I feel I could be an example of how to pursue one’s own path and goals,” she says. “Because when you overcome life’s challenges, there’s fun and joy to come.”

U.S.

## Lina Khan

*Trust buster*

By Alana Semuels

Americans have largely watched the advent of the massive corporation over the past half-century with some indifference. When companies merged with each other, they saved money on overheads and so could provide consumers with lower prices on everyday goods. But at the age of 27, while a student at Yale Law School, Lina Khan pushed back against this line of thinking. In “Amazon’s Antitrust Paradox,” a widely read article published in 2017 in the *Yale Law Journal*, Khan argued that though the rise of big companies like Amazon may mean lower prices, they should not necessarily be immune from antitrust scrutiny. Giant corporations can manipulate the markets they dominate, she wrote, forcing smaller companies out of business and worsening the economy for workers, citizens and sometimes even consumers.

It’s an argument that politicians like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders are now echoing. But it was Khan’s 24,000-word paper that gave people in the halls of power another tool for investigating monopolies.

Khan, whose parents emigrated from the U.K. to the U.S. when she was 11, is now working as counsel for the House Antitrust Subcommittee as it takes on tech companies. She says her research shows that though consumers might have an illusion of choice, a few companies dominate large sections of the economy and set their own rules. “I think there is a very coherent story to be told about how market power is harming us as a whole in all these bizarre ways that are not readily apparent,” she says. “We’re at a moment where the revival of antitrust could be extremely important in the coming decades.”





BRAZIL

# Pablo Vittar

## A drag queen for the world

By Andrew R. Chow

IF PABLO VITTAR IS MAKING HEADLINES, they might be about her smash hit songs, her astonishing Fashion Week outfits, her disruptive political statements or some combination of the three. Over the past four years, the 24-year-old Brazilian drag queen and pop star has seamlessly integrated the personal with the cultural and political—using her platform as a musical star to demand equality for LGBT communities in Brazil and beyond.

In a music ecosystem made global by streaming, Vittar, who identifies as gay and genderfluid, has emerged as one of South America's most popular exports: she has garnered half a billion Spotify streams and a billion YouTube views for earworms that gild Brazilian rhythms with an American pop sheen. She's forged partnerships with superstars from around the world, dancing alongside Charli XCX in "Flash Pose" and making out with Diplo in "Então Vai." On Instagram, she has 9 million followers—more than double the number of her drag idol, RuPaul. "It's so cool to see drag-queen art and LGBTQ art going mainstream," Vittar says of her own success as well as that of RuPaul's *Drag Race* and FX's *Pose*.

Vittar has used her global megaphone both to celebrate her identity—performing at the World Pride parade, the U.N. Headquarters and Rio's Carnaval—and to speak out against dangers. "I feel ashamed to be a Brazilian sometimes because of this President," Vittar says of Jair Bolsonaro, a self-professed homophobe elected to the presidency last year. In 2018, 420 LGBT people were killed in Brazil, according to the country's oldest gay-rights organization. "People are dying. People are having their home and rights taken away."

The backlash has only inspired Vittar to fight more fiercely for queer rights. She has a new trilingual album on the way—the first half of which comes out Nov. 1—and will continue to champion other drag queens during her world tour. "As an artist, you have this duty to take a stance on things," she says. "If speaking out will put me in a risky spot, let us all die trying."







AUSTRALIA

## Amanda Johnstone

*Innovating to stop suicide*

By Charlie Campbell

It wasn't one suicide note in particular that jolted Amanda Johnstone into action; it was what linked them all. "They all thought they were a burden and it was too hard to keep reaching out," says Johnstone, 33. Growing up in Tasmania, which has Australia's highest youth suicide rate, she had three close friends and nine people from her wider social circle take their own lives.

In an attempt to harness her own grief, Johnstone began getting her friends to routinely check in. Each day at 4 p.m., they would grade their own mental well-being on a scale of 1 to 10 in a text message sent to the group. This flagged when individuals were feeling low without having to actively seek help.

More than 300 million people around the world suffer from depression, according to the World Health Organization, but fewer than half of them receive any treatments for depression. So Johnstone decided to take her simple scheme global. In November 2017, she launched a free peer-support app, Be a Looper, to let people check in with five friends daily and give themselves a numerical rating for their mental well-being.

"We are all on our phones all the time so it made sense to create something that's already in people's hands, which gives them that nudge to reach out and take a little bit of care of each other," she says.

With a staff of 35, Be a Looper has spread to 76 countries—Australia, the U.S. and the U.K. are top for users—and nearly 20,000 people have flagged suicidal feelings to their loop, allowing their support network to rally around. It's a simple routine that can save lives. "It's more of a burden to bury someone," says Johnstone. "You can never forget those people."







RUSSIA

## Alexander Gorbunov

*Speaking out under Putin*

By Simon Shuster

It was late on a Friday in April when Alexander Gorbunov, one of Russia's most popular bloggers, got a call from his mom. Police officers with assault rifles had barged into his parents' apartment, she said, asking about her son, what he does for a living and whether he has ties to terrorism.

Gorbunov, 27, felt helpless. He was living in Moscow, a thousand miles from his family home. The police claimed his phone had been used to make bomb threats in Moscow, but Gorbunov suspected a different reason for the raid—that his online rants, posted under the pseudonym StalinGulag, had hit a nerve inside the Kremlin. "Like any authoritarian regime," he says, "this one is most afraid of being laughed at." His writings, skewering the government over corruption and mocking President Vladimir Putin, had earned Gorbunov, 27, over

a million followers on Twitter.

After the police visited his parents, Gorbunov felt he had few options left. "With no independent courts in Russia, the only way to protect yourself, however fleetingly, is to go public," he says. So far, it's working. The police have not pursued charges against him, and after he revealed his identity in May, Gorbunov's popularity in Russia has only grown. His new YouTube channel has racked up over 2 million views for his tirades on Russian politics, which he delivers deadpan each week from his wheelchair. (He has a condition known as spinal muscular atrophy.)

Gorbunov recognizes the difficulty of bringing change to Putin's Russia but is comforted by his online supporters. "There are people out there who share my thoughts," he says. "That's what creates hope for this country's future."

MOROCCO

## Zainab Fasiki

*Comics crusader*

By Joseph Hincks

IN ONE OF THE FIRST SELF-PORTRAITS Zainab Fasiki shared publicly, she is standing vigil over the city—giant, green, naked. Fasiki, 25, says *The Protector of Casablanca* was a way to fight against daily street harassment. "The message is: This is me trying to protect the city. I'm here, and I can change some things."

That defiance characterizes much of the work in Fasiki's new graphic novel, *Hshouma*, published in French and Arabic editions in September. The book, whose title roughly translates as "shame," pairs the artist's playful illustrations with discussions of sexuality, gender-based violence and censorship. "I want every Moroccan to read it because we have nothing on these topics at school or at home," she says.

When Fasiki first left her conservative hometown of Fez for college in the coastal city of Casablanca, she thought life would get easier. But catcalling was a daily challenge, and for the handful of female students in the same mechanical-engineering degree program as Fasiki, bullying was common. After a man tried to snatch her bag in the city center last year, Fasiki, who has been drawing since the age of 4, was inspired to publish many of the illustrations she had kept private—some featuring nude women.

Fasiki's conservative critics say her images are degrading. But she wants to draw attention to society's obsession with how women present themselves. "I'm trying to say you can see a naked woman and you can find it normal. It has nothing to do with sex. It's just a body."

In early 2018, Fasiki launched a mentorship program to prepare 20 female artists each month to navigate exploitation in Morocco's art industry, which she encountered at the beginning of her career.

Inspired by Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadawi and French-Iranian graphic novelist Marjane Satrapi, Fasiki is also countering Western narratives that portray the Middle East as either hypersexual or repressed. "Everyone wants you to be a certain way," she says. "I love proving them wrong."







U.S.

## Davóne Tines

*Not your average opera star***By Eben Shapiro**

Davóne Tines' instrument is giving him problems. He has performed flawlessly on major international stages, but on this warm September day in a studio in lower Manhattan, the musician is having some unusual difficulties. The culprit is Camembert. Opera singers are told to avoid dairy products for their alleged mucus-inducing properties, but a cheese tray at a benefit Tines attended the night before was too tempting.

After some world-class throat clearing, the 32-year-old reverts to form and dazzles the assembled crowd with a voice that, at the Juilliard School, puzzled his vocal teachers with its extraordinary range—from a feel-it-in-the-pit-of-your-stomach bass-baritone to a goose-bump-inducing falsetto. Tines, who describes himself on his Instagram account as “young, gifted and Black,” is among the most compelling classically trained singers working in America today. While steeped in the canon, he is more interested in contemporary work. He recently helped create and starred in the sought-after New York City run of *The Black Clown*, a 70-minute work of music and movement adapted from the eponymous Langston Hughes poem.

*The Black Clown* was born out of Tines' frustration with Sundays spent singing in a choir after he graduated from Harvard in 2009 and started work in Washington, D.C. He enjoyed the “high-quality music-making” involved in singing classical Christian repertoire, but “really wanted to sing something that was soulful and whimsical.” In 2011, he emailed composer Michael Schachter, a friend from college, and they began a seven-year collaboration on *The Black Clown*.

Performed in front of audiences that Tines describes as largely “liberal white elites,” the piece feels like a challenge. It begins with Tines gazing directly at individual audience members while repeating the poem's opening line: “You laugh/ Because I'm poor and black and funny—/ Not the same as you.” The tension is immediate, and from that, “there's a connection,” Tines says. “Once we share an experience, we can perhaps look at each other with a little more empathy.”

A charismatic and commanding artist who carries his towering 6-ft. 2-in. body lightly, Tines is poised for a packed year ahead—prestigious bookings, a combination of classical and new works, and a planned recital at Carnegie Hall. Asked if he's made peace with classical works, Tines sighs. “I'm just doing what black people have always done, which is to see the resources around them, put them together and use them for moving forward.”







UGANDA

## Brian Gitta

### *Revolutionizing the fight against malaria*

By Aryn Baker

THE BEST WAY TO COMBAT MALARIA, which causes more than 400,000 deaths every year, is through rapid and accurate diagnosis, treatment and containment. But in Uganda, where malaria is one of the leading causes of death, a good diagnosis is hard to come by. Blood tests are time-consuming and require trained lab technicians—hard to find in the small clinics used by most of the population.

After being misdiagnosed for the third time, software engineer Brian Gitta decided to do something about it. “It was such a waste of time, going to the clinic, waiting in line. I knew there had to be a better way.” For the past six years, the 27-year-old has worked with doctors, scientists and fellow software engineers—all of whom have had their own brushes with the disease—to develop a simple method to test for malaria without a blood sample, a microscope or a trained technician.

All that’s needed is their new invention, a portable shoebox-size device they call a matiscope (from the Swahili word for treatment) and a smartphone. Patients with malaria-like symptoms, including high fever, chills or headaches, can place a finger in the device cradle, which uses

magnets and a beam of red light to detect changes in blood cells caused by the malaria parasite. The readings are analyzed by the smartphone, diagnosed and, if positive, can be uploaded to a nationwide grid so that national health authorities can monitor for outbreaks. It’s reusable and provides results in two minutes. “This is a game changer,” says Dr. Jimmy Opigo, the manager for Uganda’s National Malaria Control Program. Not only does an accurate diagnosis mean appropriate medical prescriptions, thus avoiding overmedication that can lead to treatment resistance, the real-time outbreak-monitoring aspect could pave the way for targeted prevention campaigns. “This system could be a key part of ending malaria worldwide,” Opigo says. “I am proud it is coming from one of our own.”

Development wasn’t easy, says Gitta, a self-described workaholic who graduated from Uganda’s Makerere University with a degree in computer science. But despite early setbacks, the team kept pursuing the idea. Now on its fifth iteration, the machine is in clinical trials in Uganda and Angola, and is showing results on par with the blood-sample and microscope method. Gitta expects to reach market within the next three years. “If I had known how difficult this would be, I’m not sure I would have started down this path,” he says. But “it’s O.K. to fail, as long as you keep pushing through to your idea.” □





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# Time Off



NEW  
DIMENSIONS  
With *Gemini  
Man*, director  
Ang Lee pushes  
forward into 3-D  
filmmaking

## INSIDE

FROM KOREA, A PERFECTLY  
TIMELY FILM

A DOCUSERIES EXPLORES THE  
ORIGINS OF HATE

KARA WALKER BUILDS  
SOMETHING BOLD IN LONDON

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER HAPAK



## MOVIES

### Ang Lee wants to change the way you see

By Andrew R. Chow

**A**NG LEE ALREADY KNOWS HOW YOU FEEL about 3-D movies. “It gives you a headache—of course you don’t like it!” the Academy Award-winning director says at an editing studio in midtown Manhattan. “The projection is bad. It’s too dark.”

Complaints like these have driven many moviegoers and filmmakers away from the medium over the past decade. To many, it’s little more than a gimmick for superhero blockbusters, a quickly receding novelty.

But Lee, long an iconoclast, still believes in 3-D. In fact, he’s doubling down: his latest effort, *Gemini Man*, was shot in 3-D and at 120 frames per second, a far higher rate than the usual 24 frames per second. The visual effect is one of extreme fluidity, more like a video game than a traditional feature film. The movie, out Oct. 11, is in many ways a standard action sci-fi flick—Will Smith plays an aging hit man fighting a younger cloned version of himself. But Lee hopes it will be a Trojan horse for a mind-set shift around the divisive medium.

So why would one of film’s leading auteurs devote his career to what most view as a technological trifle? Lee claims that 3-D is a fundamentally different art form from 2-D—that when the brain perceives a realistic third dimension, it prompts a heightened sense of immersion and deeper emotional connection. He also believes that the shared movie-theater experience still possesses an unmatched power—and that in the Peak TV era, 3-D might be a key way to lure audiences out of their living rooms.

Whether Lee remains a lone warrior or the leader of a revolution hinges on the financial support of Hollywood—and whether other filmmakers follow him into a largely untapped dimension. “2-D is home,” he says. “I want to go to a new world.”

**THE DIRECTOR HAS MADE** a career out of defying norms. In 1995, when Asian filmmakers were scant in Hollywood, Lee, a native of Taiwan who spoke minimal English, spearheaded an adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* to overwhelming acclaim. In 2000, he brought martial arts to Western audiences with *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which became the highest-grossing foreign-language film in American history. And his 2005 drama *Brokeback Mountain* marked a turning point for queer stories in mainstream culture and earned him an Oscar for best director.

While Lee raced between genres, styles and obsessions early in his career, his current decade has been one of single-minded intent: to advance 3-D filmmaking. After James Cameron’s 3-D epic *Avatar* was released in 2009, grossing nearly \$2.8 billion at the box office, the form experienced a renaissance: films like Alfonso Cuarón’s



Lee, with Smith, hopes 3-D might be a key way to lure audiences out of their living rooms

*Gravity*, Guillermo del Toro’s *Pacific Rim* and Lee’s own Oscar-winning *Life of Pi*—which was praised for its stunning aquatic visuals and glowering digitally created tiger—all achieved success within the next four years, suggesting that a new era of filmmaking had arrived.

But 3-D’s triumphant arrival was soon beset by a harsh backlash from consumers, who bristled at putting on bulky glasses and shelling out extra cash. Box-office returns dropped steadily throughout the decade, hitting a low point last year, as studios stopped greenlighting projects and theaters quit investing in 3-D digital screens. Lee’s ambitious and highly anticipated 3-D drama *Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk*, which failed to break even at the box office in 2016, looked like it could be the form’s last stand.

Rather than concede, Lee became convinced the problem wasn’t the medium but the approach. Many recent 3-D releases, including *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, weren’t filmed with 3-D in mind but were converted in postproduction.





“We imitated film,” Lee says of projects like these. “We used 2-D concepts.” In order to fully make the leap into the future, new techniques—from lighting to camera angles to makeup applications—would have to be developed.

For *Gemini Man*, Lee mobilized hundreds of visual-effects artists, developing higher frame rates, clearer CGI graphics and more precise projector technologies. The process has been draining. “Eighty percent of the time, you’re not dealing with art but obstacles. It’s such a waste of energy,” he says. But his pursuit is worth it to him because of 3-D’s inherent neurological advantages. “In 2-D, a movie is a picture on a wall: it’s not something that’s actually real,” he says. “In 3-D, your brain wants to believe things are actually in front of you because they have shape and movement.”

The film is filled with this type of vivid detail. In a chase scene through the streets of Cartagena, Colombia, you see not just a blur of motorcycles but the brushstrokes of colorful street art and the individual feathers on pigeons taking flight. In a combat scene

that rivals *Crouching Tiger* in its elaborate choreography, the punches thrown are not just flurries of fists but weighty individual blows. “There’s a different intensity of somebody invading you,” Lee says of the viewer experience. “There’s no safe distance.”

While the action sequences are formidable, Lee says the medium’s biggest advantage is in the study of faces. One scene of which he’s particularly proud shows the protagonist’s young clone (acted by Smith and generated through digital effects) breaking down emotionally when he discovers a life-changing secret. His forehead is dewy, and his bottom lip quivers. “You can feel the gut feeling of somebody’s temperature. You can feel them blush,” Lee says. “You can see thoughts in their eyes.”

At the moment, 3-D remains too expensive and unpopular for studios to finance pure adult dramas, which tend to have lower box-office grosses. In order to continue exploring the form, Lee had to smuggle his emotional scenes into a blockbuster. “In painting or writing, you can try out different techniques on a small scale. But the film industry has big commercial implications,” he says. “To have something new, you have to come out loud and bold, with big action and a big movie star.”

*Gemini Man* is that loud and bold compromise. It allowed him to work with a bankable name (Smith); to create something never attempted before (a fully CGI human performance); and to grapple with both technological riddles and complex emotional issues, like aging and insecurity. If audiences come for Smith, Lee hopes they might adjust their visual expectations for 3-D along the way, growing to appreciate the medium instead of finding it distracting. “Our eyes can be trained,” he says.

**THERE’S ONE MAJOR PROBLEM**, however: most audiences won’t see *Gemini Man* in the way Lee intended. While the film is shot at a hyperrealistic 120 frames per second, most theaters

in the U.S. are equipped to show it only at 60 frames, which is slightly blurrier and less detailed. And that’s to say nothing of the thousands of people who prefer to wait until the film comes out on streaming, who might watch it on a tablet or a phone.

Lee is aware he’s pulling the cart before the horse, but he sees no other way forward. He remains adamant that theatrical releases are a vital form of communal catharsis, even as filmmakers like Martin Scorsese and Steven Soderbergh have decamped for Netflix. “I think sitting in a temple shape with a ceremony will always be important,” he says. “There’s some kind of a release of energy and a purge of soul.” He hopes that if he offers something never seen

before and impossible to replicate at home, a chain reaction will occur: audiences will return to the theaters, theaters will invest in digital 3-D screening technology, studios will finance projects, and top filmmakers will jump back into the medium.

Jerry Bruckheimer, the veteran Hollywood producer behind *Gemini Man*, shares Lee’s optimism, likening this technological breakthrough to the jump from black-and-white film to color. “If this picture works, we’re kind of copycats,” Bruckheimer says. “I think it’s an enormous leap. Hopefully other filmmakers will follow.”

Cameron’s *Avatar* sequels loom somewhere on the horizon, while *Lord of the Rings* director Peter Jackson is also exploring the form. Lee hopes that an institute or workshop will be created to buoy young, curious 3-D filmmakers.

But before the cavalry arrives, Lee is game to fight this battle alone. He’s already set his sights on his next dream project—a 3-D dramatization of the 1975 Muhammad Ali–Joe Frazier match—and is just waiting on a financial green light. “For a long time, I always doubted. Am I crazy? Am I seeing something that is just me seeing it? But I don’t think I’m crazy,” Lee says with a laugh. “With 3-D, it’s like looking at a baby vs. a sophisticated artist. You have to let this baby grow up.” □

**‘With 3-D, it’s like looking at a baby vs. a sophisticated artist. Let this baby grow up.’**

**ANG LEE,**  
director of  
*Gemini Man*



## PROFILE

### Life after wartime

By Matt Gallagher

TO DISAPPEAR FROM THE WORLD AS YOU KNOW it and escape to something else—Who hasn't heard that siren call? It's long been a theme in the work of *The Things They Carried* author Tim O'Brien, reluctant bard of the Vietnam War and soldier-poet of the baby boomers. He disappeared himself a while back, stopped publishing and became a father of two boys, finding a fulfilling existence as a teacher in the quiet Texas suburbs.

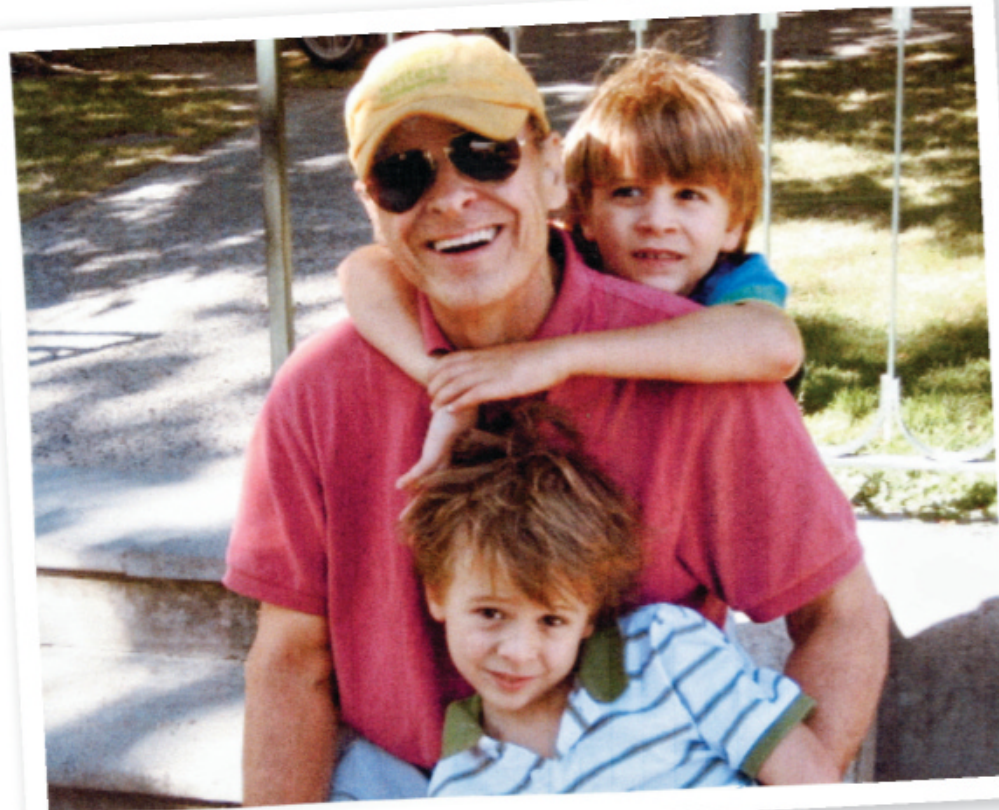
Those separate lives now converge in O'Brien's *Dad's Maybe Book*, his first in 17 years and a stirring blend of memoir, letters to his young sons and meditations on the humbling nature of parenthood. Sons meant a new role for O'Brien, one that had nothing to do with Vietnam or literary stardom. It's a work that's the spiritual inheritor of John Steinbeck's *Travels With Charley* and Kurt Vonnegut's *A Man Without a Country*. Like those, *Dad's Maybe Book* dwells on the state of America and American life. He takes absolutism to task, finds qualifications for his own pacifism and considers the paradox of a moral society that allows for forever war.

At 73, O'Brien is also exploring mortality. He says it's likely this will be his final book: "A lot of my writing here is me trying to look at death as directly as I can. It makes a good capstone for my career. A good tombstone too."

**BORN INTO AN AMERICA** "fed by the spoils of 1945 victory," O'Brien's life and writing trace the second half of the American Century. Two early works published in the '70s, the Vietnam War memoir *If I Die in a Combat Zone* and the home-front novel *Northern Lights*, set the foundation for his 1978 breakthrough, *Going After Cacciato*. His story of an AWOL Army grunt, which incorporates elements of magical realism, won a National Book Award.

When the 1980s arrived, America wanted to forget the recent past. But O'Brien kept writing about it, societal amnesia be damned. First came the rollicking 1985 novel *The Nuclear Age*. Throughout the decade, he published stories that melded war with memory, peace with reckoning. These were collected in *The Things They Carried*, O'Brien's masterwork and a Pulitzer finalist.

If you've sat in American-literature classrooms from 1990 onward, you've likely read these stories. Many readers cite the eponymous "The Things They Carried" as the one that resonates most. For soldiers and veterans, in my experience, it's



Novelist O'Brien in 2009 with his two sons, Tad and Timmy, in a town in France



O'Brien's new work, *Dad's Maybe Book*, is the acclaimed novelist's contemplative look at fatherhood, his literary life, and lessons to his young sons about America and war

"How to Tell a True War Story," about the difficulty of talking about our experiences. It's the one I turn to—as a vet, writer, human—in a world gone mad.

O'Brien was a conscript. He was drafted into a war he wanted no part of, and has written over the years that going to Vietnam as he did may have been the actual act of cowardice. And O'Brien has stressed that war is but a subject for him, not a label or way of life. "The context may sometimes be war, but the term *war writer* carries a lot of baggage," he says. "Was Joseph Conrad only an ocean writer? Was Toni Morrison only a black writer? Of course not."

Yet it's a steep irony that a reluctant draftee like O'Brien, so devoted to exposing war's endless folly, has inspired so many volunteer soldiers. Despite this incongruence, he has served as a generous mentor for many former soldiers, myself included.

Layered and contemplative, *Dad's Maybe Book* immerses itself in the bones of modern American life, and even includes a comparison of his Vietnam experience to that of the British redcoats at Lexington and Concord. More than anything, O'Brien hopes the book will serve as an ongoing expression of love for his sons. "They can turn to it when they're 40, 50," he says, "and I'm long gone but they want to know more about who their dad was, and what we were like, together, as a family."

Gallagher's new novel, *Empire City*, will be published in April



REVIEW

## A first from Oman

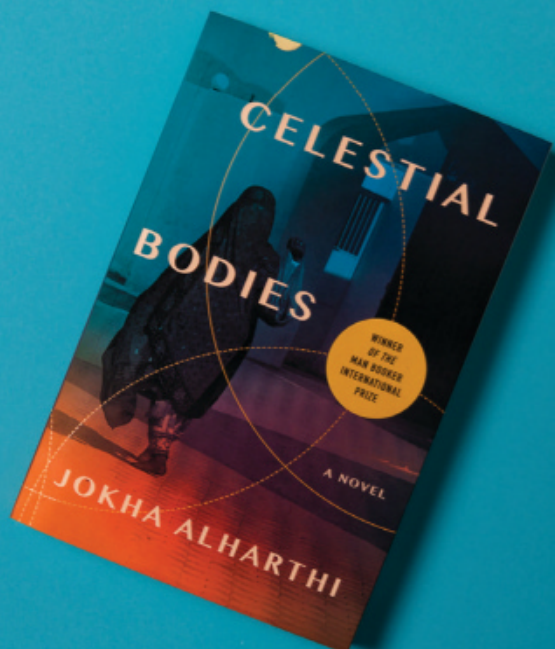
By Naina Bajekal

“WHEN WE ARE AWAY FROM HOME, IN NEW AND STRANGE PLACES, we get to know ourselves better,” Abdallah, the son of a rich merchant, thinks as he gazes out an airplane window. It’s a sentiment that will resonate with many readers who immerse themselves in the rich, dense landscape of Jokha Alharthi’s *Celestial Bodies*, newly translated into English.

The novel has already made history—as the first by an Omani woman to be translated into English, and the first originally written in Arabic to win the Man Booker International Prize. (Marilyn Booth shares the award for her translation.) Through the lives of three sisters and their families, Alharthi charts the dizzying transformation of Oman in the decades after it achieved independence from Britain in 1951. During that time, the Gulf state redefined itself and opened up to Western commerce.

Originally published in 2010 as *Sayyidat al-Qamar* (*Ladies of the Moon*), the novel is written in short, experimental chapters that shift between streams of consciousness and memories and across multiple timelines. Alharthi alternates the first-person voice of Abdallah, the son of a slave trader (Oman only abolished slavery in 1970), with a third-person viewpoint following the sisters and multiple other characters. The results are mixed—the cast is so broad that it’s impossible to follow the story without regular glances at the family tree provided. But the variety of perspectives is effective in offering a window into a country that few Western readers will know intimately.

*Celestial Bodies* is strongest in its exploration of how the changes in Oman affect women: within one generation, they are exposed to ideas from abroad and start moving away from cloistered, rural life. But Alharthi, who began writing the novel while homesick in Edinburgh as she completed her Ph.D. in classical Arabic literature, pushes past stereotypical narratives of Muslim women defying patriarchy, instead illustrating the difficulties of balancing tradition and newfound freedoms. It’s a tale that perhaps could have been written only in a strange new place itself. □



COURTESY TIM O'BRIEN

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at least half of adults had a lower desire  
to eat than before breakfast for 3 1/2 hours.



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## TimeOff Reviews



The wealthy Park couple (Lee Sun-kyun and Jo Yeo-jeong)

### MOVIES

## A film for right now, from a master

By Stephanie Zacharek

BECAUSE MOVIES TAKE SO LONG to make, they can't always be as immediately topical as television is. But whether by sheer luck or keen prescience, Bong Joon-ho's *Parasite* is the movie for right now. Kim Ki-taek (Song Kang-ho) and Chung-sook (Jang Hye-jin) live with their two teenagers in a small basement apartment. Both parents are unemployed, and the family picks up odd jobs—like folding pizza boxes, badly—to make ends meet. But even if the Kims' living conditions are less than ideal, they're optimistic. In the opening scene, son Ki-woo (Choi Woo-sik) and daughter Ki-jung (Park So-dam) roam through the cramped flat holding their cell phones aloft in the search of free wi-fi. They make it fun: sometimes you can pull what you need out of thin air.

The family's luck changes when Ki-woo lands a gig as a tutor to a high school student, Da-hye (Jung Ji-so), from a rich family, the Parks. Before long, and by dishonest means, he gets every member of his family employed in the Park household. At this point, you may

think you have *Parasite* all figured out: it's a dark comedy about grifters using their wiles to get by, a parable about forgotten members of society who manage to squeeze in through the back door—that would have been a good enough movie right there.

But Bong, the director of films like *Snowpiercer* and *Memories of Murder*, sails beyond good enough, devising a twist upon a twist and connecting one scene to the next with ingenious precision. It's impossible to figure out where *Parasite* is headed.

*Parasite* won the top prize at Cannes, and it's South Korea's entry for the Best International Feature Film Oscar. There are good reasons why it's poised to resonate worldwide. It tells a story you could probably follow without subtitles, or any dialogue at all: the faces of these actors show with piercing clarity how it feels to be outsiders in a world of wealth and privilege. Yet *Parasite* is first and foremost a family story, a reminder of how much we have when we at least have one another. □

PARASITE: NEON; LANGE: GETTY IMAGES



QUICK TALK

## Jessica Lange

*Two-time Academy Award–winning actor Jessica Lange—whose recent projects include American Horror Story and The Politician—is also an accomplished photographer. Although Lange, now 70, left her hometown in northern Minnesota at age 18, her affection for the region has endured and is the subject of a new book of photography, Highway 61.*

**This is your third book of photography. What sets it apart from the others?** It's the first time I had worked this way, with an idea and a result in mind. I wanted to record as much of the 1,400 miles between the beginning of Highway 61 and the end of Highway 61 as I could. I was looking for things, and it was much more deliberate.

**In the book, you write about feelings of loneliness at visiting parts of that scenic route. Why did that come up for you?** I think I've always been extremely sensitive to loneliness. I was a lonely child. It has been one of the main conditions of life. And I feel it there. I see it in the empty storefronts and the boarded-up buildings and the abandoned farms and the barns that have collapsed. It feels as though something has gone missing. I left when small towns were still very vibrant and vital. Over the ensuing decades, the industry, the mills and factories, like most of rural America, have disappeared. But that's not to say it's a ghost-ridden highway.

**Many of the photographs include people. Was human connection something you wanted to emphasize?** I certainly hope so. The book is not a political statement. It's not social documentary. For me, photography always is emotional. It's the same as acting, in a way. I hope it's kind of an emotional journey down that highway. At least, it was for me.

**Did you ever feel you had to make a choice between acting and photography?** It was never a choice between one or the other, and it still isn't. I do photography because I love it, but I don't have to support myself with it. So I pick it up, I work extensively, I travel, I take lots of rolls of film, but it's really just for the love of doing it.

**How does your work as a photographer interact with your work as an actor?** The discipline of acting and the idea of being present has helped with the photography. The photography gives me a chance to be absolutely alone, and that's been a wonderful kind of antidote to the confusion and the chaos of working on a movie or being in the theater. One really informs the other.

—SUYIN HAYNES



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## TimeOff Reviews

### TELEVISION

## Hate watch

By Judy Berman

THE DOCUSERIES *WHY WE HATE*, PREMIERING OCT. 13 ON Discovery, is as ambitious as it is timely. Backed by executive producers including Steven Spielberg and Alex Gibney, directors Geeta Gandbhir and Sam Pollard explore how extremists and demagogues use tactics like propaganda to incite violence. Beyond tracing the roots of hate, the filmmakers ask why and how it drives ordinary people to monstrous behavior.

It's a massive undertaking, one that demanded the filmmakers not only synthesize reams of relevant information, but also avoid stereotyping that would perpetuate the same conflicts they seek to defuse. They succeed, mostly, by scouring the world for complex case studies, from the U.S. to Rwanda to Myanmar. Along with ensuring that no group is depicted as uniquely hateful, this expansive, inclusive approach allows viewers to calmly consider the role of hate in conflicts where they don't have a personal allegiance.

Diversity is paramount here, and not just in the sense that people with a wide range of identities are represented. Instead of casting a single host for the series, Gandbhir and Pollard select a guide for each episode whose expertise is salient to the topic at hand. International criminal lawyer Patricia Viseur Sellers lends empathy and perspective to the toughest hour, "Crimes Against Humanity," which probes the phenomenon of mass killings.

The show begins and, in a finale devoted to hope, ends with science: psychology, anthropology, neuroscience. This emphasis leaves some blind spots. By leaning on interpersonal as well as scientific solutions, the series prioritizes quelling aggression over righting injustices. Yet no amount of mindfulness meditation—one of the proposed curatives—will heal the wounds of genocide or slavery; kindness in one-on-one settings may never change the fact that some people in this world have more reason to be angry than others. *Why We Hate* is a vital show. If only it had the courage to consider that the most effective form of conflict resolution might be justice. □



*Lawyers Bryan Stevenson and Patricia Viseur Sellers reflect on the connection between hate and crimes against humanity*



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Photo By  
ANDREW ECCLES



## FEATURE

# Reimagining the empire

By Suyin Haynes

“I’M FASCINATED BY THE GRANDEUR, the pompousness, the overmuch,” says Kara Walker. That sensibility fueled the American artist’s latest creation, *Fons Americanus*—a 13-m-high fountain unveiled Sept. 30 in London’s Tate Modern museum. With a cast of characters and iconography reflecting the intertwined histories of Africa, Europe and America, *Fons Americanus* presents the brutality of slavery in a subversively joyful setting.

Walker is known for her ambitious work across mediums interrogating race, sexuality, slavery and identity; her 2014 installation *A Subtlety* was housed in Brooklyn’s Domino Sugar Factory, attracting over 130,000 visitors to the main giant-sphinx sculpture. *Fons Americanus* is Walker’s fourth site-specific work, and it references classical British artists such as J.M.W. Turner and William Blake, as well as African-American historical figures including Emmett Till and Marcus Garvey.

The artist was inspired in part by London’s Victoria Memorial, a towering, majestic monument to the Queen who commandeered the British Empire. “I just got this jazzy feeling,” she says. “I’m interested in ways allegorical figures are misrepresentative of the thing they’re meant to symbolize.” Tributes to empire in the U.K., like Confederate statues in the U.S., have come under scrutiny in recent years, as observers reconsider how frequently immortalized figures also played key roles in the oppression of others. “Public space creates the opportunity for misinterpretation,” says Walker. “In some ways, I think my work is a misreading of empire.”

The contrast between the fantasy and the reality, the big and the small, forms the basis for *Fons Americanus*: “This is about the story I could tell with my own hand, which is perhaps second-class, and unseen or unheard,” says Walker, “and the story that is larger than it ought to be, than it has a right to be.” And while some monuments to empire have been dismantled, Walker is more concerned with what will take their place. “Who are we now, and what are we saying now as a people besides removing something?” she asks. “What do we build in its stead?” □



1

## THE WATER

“It was all about the water, in a way,” says Walker. She was influenced by time spent in Rome, home to the spectacular Baroque Trevi Fountain. Early on, Walker decided that water would be an integral part of the installation and would symbolize the oceans that slaves were forcibly transported across, as well as a metaphorical connection between the shared histories and identities of Africa, Europe and America.





## 2 VENUS

The fountain's centerpiece references an 1801 propaganda artwork called *The Voyage of the Sable Venus from Angola to the West Indies*, which depicted the Middle Passage as a joyful journey. While Walker calls the original image "appalling," her reinterpretation shows a celebratory, liberated priestess.



3

## PEDESTAL FIGURES

A sea captain partly modeled on Haitian revolutionary leader Toussaint L'Ouverture is one of several figures overlooking water filled with drowning slaves and infested with Damien Hirst-inspired sharks. In presenting many characters, Walker wanted to create a "nauseating, miasmic sensation."



4

## THE SHELL GROTTO

The shell featured in the 1801 *Sable Venus* artwork is also referenced in the Shell Grotto, a smaller sculpture situated separate from the main fountain.



5

## FOUNTAIN'S BASE

The ridge around the fountain's base was designed with the public in mind, inviting viewers to engage with the work: sitting is "strongly encouraged," so the piece can function "like a town square."



## Waste not, want not, pollute not

By Jamie Ducharme

TOSSING UNEATEN LEFTOVERS OR slimy lettuce may feel like no big deal. But a recent report from the sustainability-focused World Resources Institute (WRI) says food waste is responsible for 8% of annual greenhouse-gas emissions. Meanwhile, 25% of agricultural water use and a land area about the size of Canada go toward producing food that ultimately goes uneaten. If it were a country, according to WRI, food waste and loss would release more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than any nation except the U.S. and China.

Cutting back on food waste could help the environment in a few ways. Most obviously, it would save the resources and energy that go into producing unneeded food at every step of the supply chain, from farming to packaging to shipping. But as food rots in landfills, it also produces methane, one of the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change—so reducing the amount of food that goes uneaten and eventually spoils could lower overall emissions. Wasting perfectly good items also contributes to food and nutrition insecurity, since fresh, healthy items tend to be those that are wasted most, leaving behind nonperishable, processed products, says Carmen Byker Shanks, a dietitian and associate professor of food, nutrition and sustainable food systems at Montana State University. Food waste cuts into our paychecks too, costing the average American family of four roughly \$1,500 a year, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental-advocacy nonprofit.

Food waste is a global issue, but the U.S. is a major offender, discarding up to 40% of its supply each year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Governments, corporations, restaurants, stores, farmers and other food producers play a big part in reducing waste, according to WRI's report. But households are important contributors too. Here's how you can do your part to reduce food waste:



### BUY ONLY WHAT YOU NEED

The most obvious tip is also the most important: think critically about what you buy. “When shopping, plan your grocery list, avoiding impulse buying or stocking up so much that you can’t use the food by the time it’s going to go bad,” Byker Shanks says. If you accidentally buy more than you need, consider freezing, canning or pickling extra foods, or using them as components in soups, salads, smoothies and so on.

### GET ORGANIZED

Keeping a neat refrigerator or pantry can go a long way toward reducing food waste. “Put the more perishable foods right up front,” Byker Shanks says. “It’s a constant reminder to actually use that food before you go for a more preserved or processed food.” How you store perishable items matters too. Fruits and veggies typically do better in the humidity-controlled crisper, and greens can stay good longer wrapped in paper towels.



### LEARN WHAT LABELS REALLY MEAN

A study published earlier this year found that the majority of Americans sometimes toss packaged food when it gets close to its “sell by” or “use by” date, even though these labels are not federally regulated and do not refer to food spoilage. This over-cautiousness can lead to excess waste. A better strategy, the USDA says, is to check for changes in color, flavor, texture or smell.

### CONSIDER A MEAL KIT

Meal kits, which come with portioned ingredients for homemade dishes, seem like an environmental disaster, since they have lots of packaging. But a recent study found their ability to reduce food waste outweighs their environmental downsides. Consumers, says study co-author Shelie Miller, should be “thinking about things more mindfully in a systematic context.”



### KEEP PORTION SIZES MODERATE

Overeating can be a form of food waste, experts say, as people consume more than they need. A recent study argued that overindulgence is just as wasteful as food loss, if not more. Cutting back on portions can also have a positive impact on people's health. “For some consumers, that's more motivating than thinking about the environment,” says Byker Shanks.



# Cheese. Tacos. No dinner drama.



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## For the win win





# 8 Questions

**Brian Cox** The Scottish actor on 50 years playing the world's worst people, the secret of HBO's *Succession* and a telling tap on the shoulder

**On *Succession*, your brother suggests that your media-mogul character, Logan Roy, is worse than Hitler for giving airtime to climate deniers. How important do you think the rise of certain media has been in fostering the current political moment?** I think majorly important. Nowadays truth is way at the back of the class. You're dealing with massive obfuscation on a global scale. It's a dark time, and this show reflects that time.

**This is a question you should never ask a parent, but on *Succession*, which of his vermin prodigy does Logan Roy feel the most sympathy for?** The thing is, and this is the truth, he loves all of his children. He really does. But he realizes in order for them to succeed, they have to develop a tougher skin. And that's what he's doing with his children all the time. He's endlessly challenging them.

**You seem like a lovely man. Yet you've played J. Edgar Hoover, Hannibal Lecter and even Hermann Göring. Why do you get cast so often as the personification of evil?** I try to do what the old Bard asks you to do, which is to hold the mirror up to nature. The human condition is essentially quite a tragic condition. And I'm lucky because they always say the devil has the best tunes.

**You play the patriarch of a family based on very real people. Have you ever encountered any of the actual individuals in the real world?** I was in a café near my apartment in London, and this guy tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Oh, we just wanted to say we're enjoying the show enormously," and I said, "Oh, thank you." He said, "It's a little difficult for my wife at times, but she's really liking it, liking it a lot." And I

**I'M LUCKY BECAUSE THEY ALWAYS SAY THE DEVIL HAS THE BEST TUNES**



said, "Oh, yes, why is she finding it difficult?" And he said, "Oh, my wife is Elisabeth Murdoch."

**Do you like acting in superhero movies?** I liked it at the time. It's so clear to me that there is an audience that's deprived of a certain kind of life-affirming, humanitarian kind of cinema that you just don't see anymore because you've got these multiplexes that are five screens, and four of them are taken up with *The Avengers* or *Spider-Man* or what have you.

**You are now playing LBJ on Broadway in *The Great Society*. If Logan Roy and LBJ were negotiating, who would get the best of the deal?** They would both go away thinking they'd got the best of the deal. LBJ would think that he suitably bamboozled old Logan. And old Logan will think, I managed to get this guy's number.

**You didn't have much time to prepare for the LBJ part.** It was an amazingly quick turnaround: I literally had just finished that last episode of *Succession* in Dubrovnik. It was 154 pages of lines to learn and only three weeks to rehearse. But I called upon the younger Brian Cox and said, "Look, you've got to help me through this."

**You've appeared in over 200 films and TV shows. How would you rank Logan Roy in terms of your favorite characters to play?** I'd put him pretty high up there. He's such a mystery. That's the essential thing about Logan. In my time of life, it's a great role to play.

**There is going to be a third season, but there's still a final episode to come. Any hints on what to expect?** Well, I'm not going to give it away, but I think it's a doozy. People are going to go, "Oh, wow" ... down to the last frame.

—EBEN SHAPIRO





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